Vol 1024

5-IN-1

AMAR CHITRA KATHA

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The Best of Modern Indian literature

Script	Illustrations	Editor
Manoj Das	M.N.Nangare	Anant Pai

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AMAR CHITRA KATHA

The route to your roots

SAKSHI GOPAL

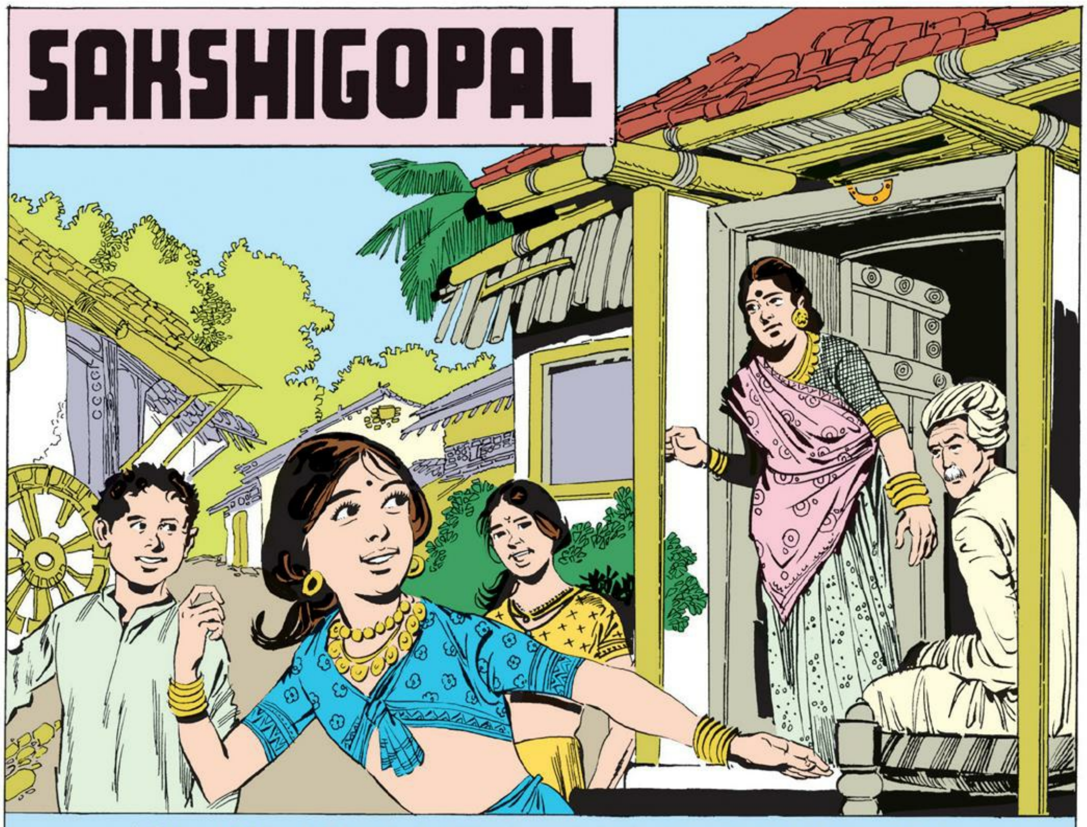
His love was powerful, his god merciful, but was that enough to win him the respect of the world? More importantly, would he win the fair Vasanti as his wife? But who would be his witness? According to legend, a miracle occurred. The innocence of the penniless young orphan was declared. The dishonest, the greedy and the ungrateful could only watch on amazed.

Script
Manoj Das

Illustrations
M.N.Nangare

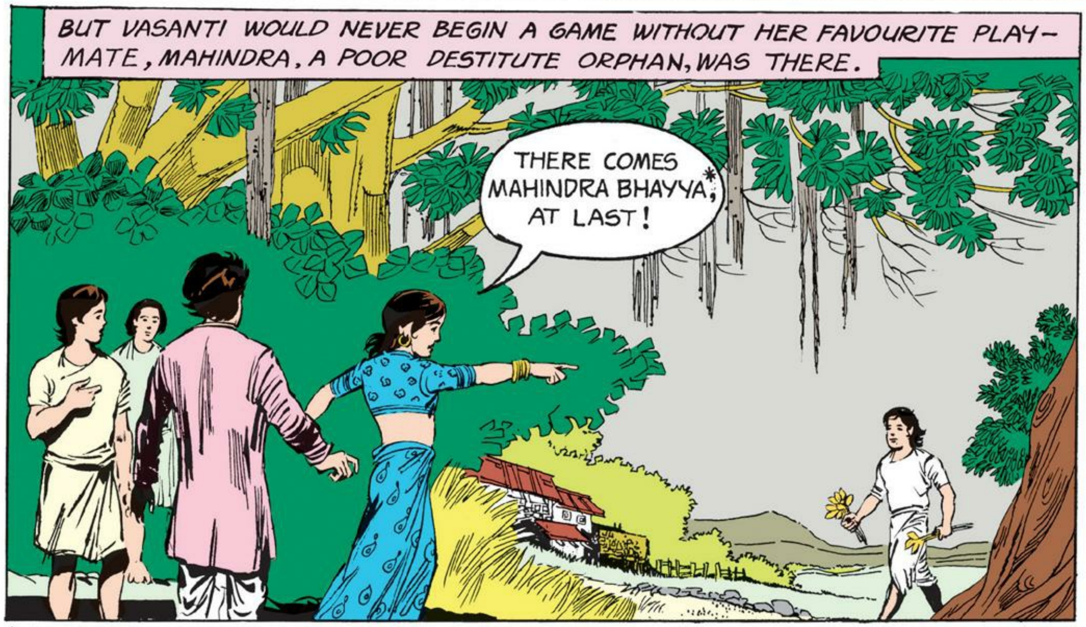
Editor
Anant Pai

SAKSHIGOPAL



LONG LONG AGO, IN A SMALL VILLAGE LIVED RAGHAV AND RADHABAI. THEIR ONLY CHILD, VASANTI, WAS A SWEET LITTLE GIRL WITH WHOM THE OTHER CHILDREN OF THE VILLAGE LOVED TO PLAY.

BUT VASANTI WOULD NEVER BEGIN A GAME WITHOUT HER FAVOURITE PLAYMATE, MAHINDRA, A POOR DESTITUTE ORPHAN, WAS THERE.


THERE COMES MAHINDRA BHAYYA*, AT LAST!

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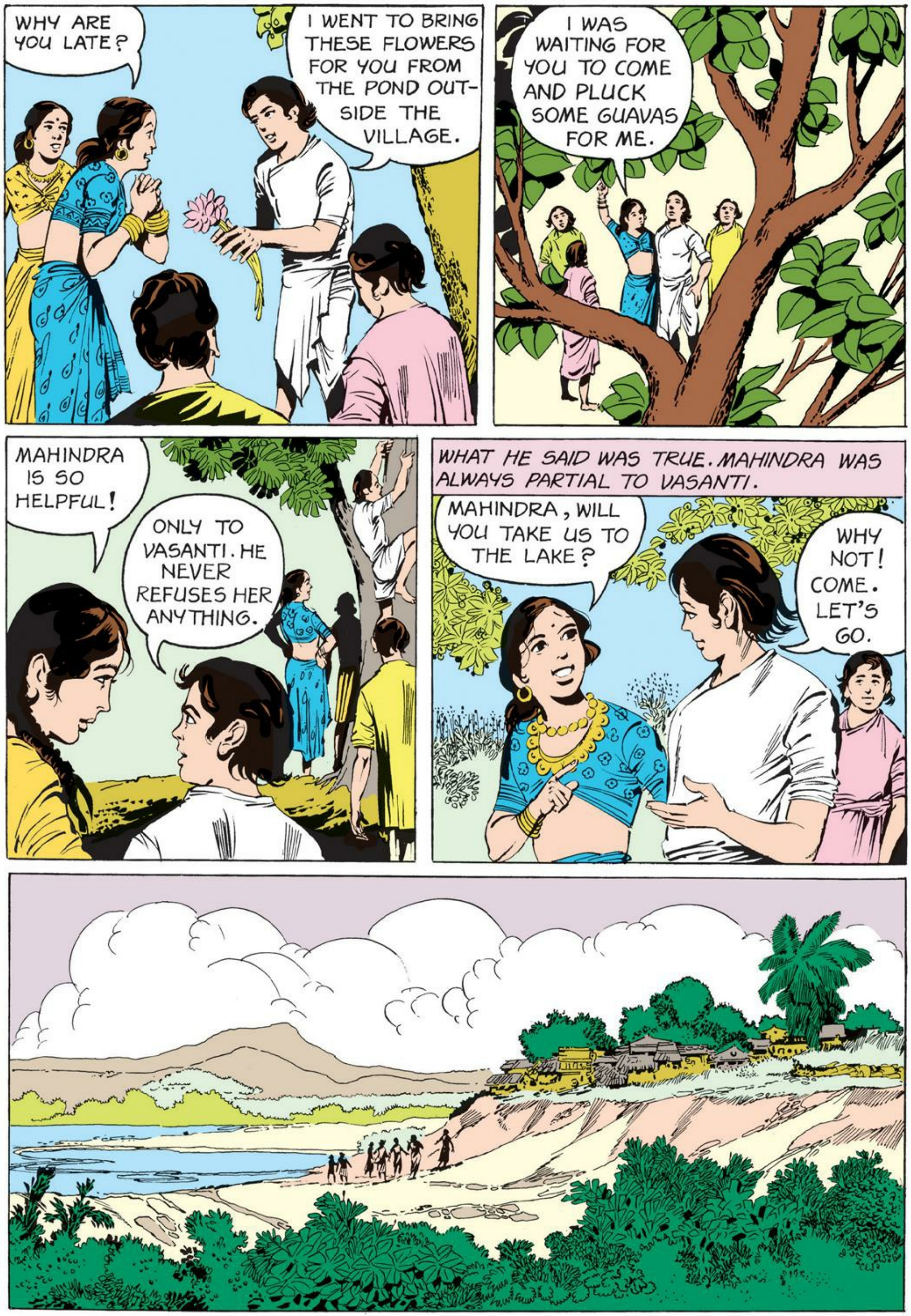
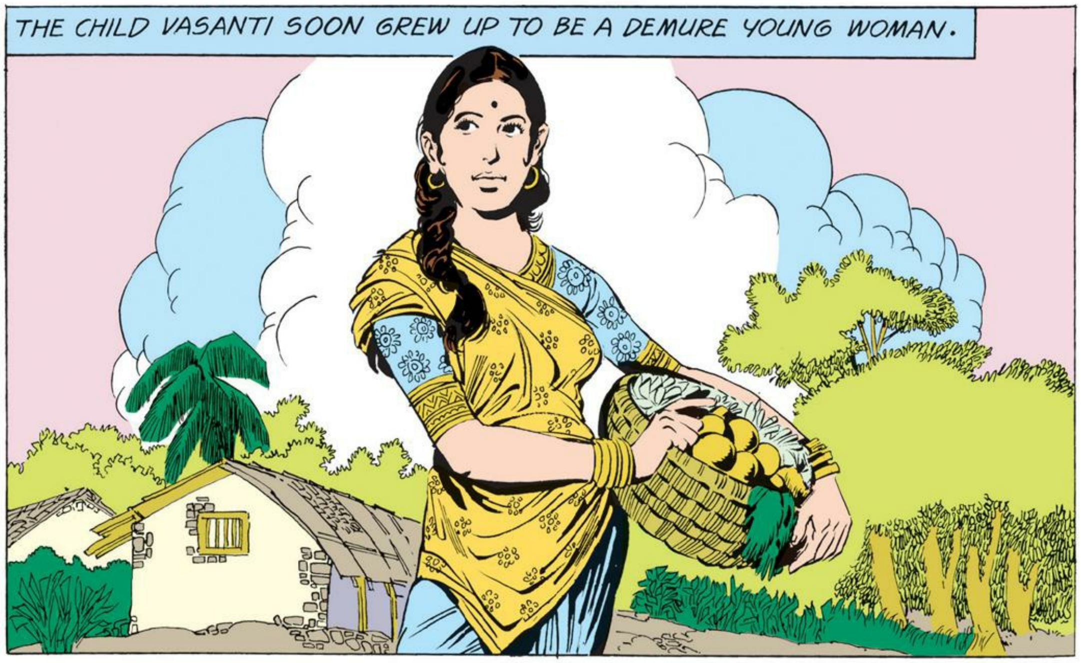
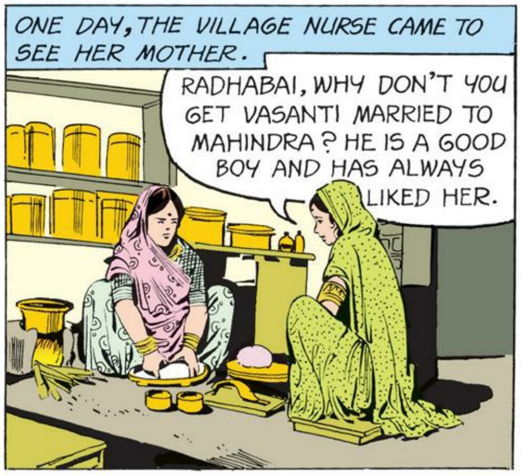
* LITERALLY BROTHER; A TERM OF AFFECTION


WHY ARE YOU LATE?
I WENT TO BRING THESE FLOWERS FOR YOU FROM THE POND OUTSIDE THE VILLAGE.
I WAS WAITING FOR YOU TO COME AND PLUCK SOME GUAVAS FOR ME.
MAHINDRA IS SO HELPFUL!
ONLY TO VASANTI. HE NEVER REFUSES HER ANYTHING.
WHAT HE SAID WAS TRUE. MAHINDRA WAS ALWAYS PARTIAL TO VASANTI.
MAHINDRA, WILL YOU TAKE US TO THE LAKE?
WHY NOT! COME. LET'S GO.

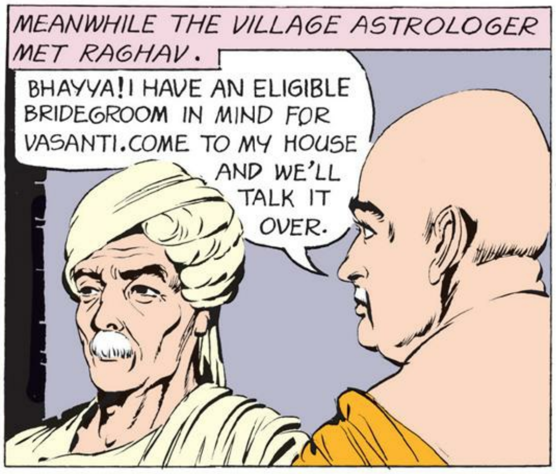
THE CHILD VASANTI SOON GREW UP TO BE A DEMURE YOUNG WOMAN.



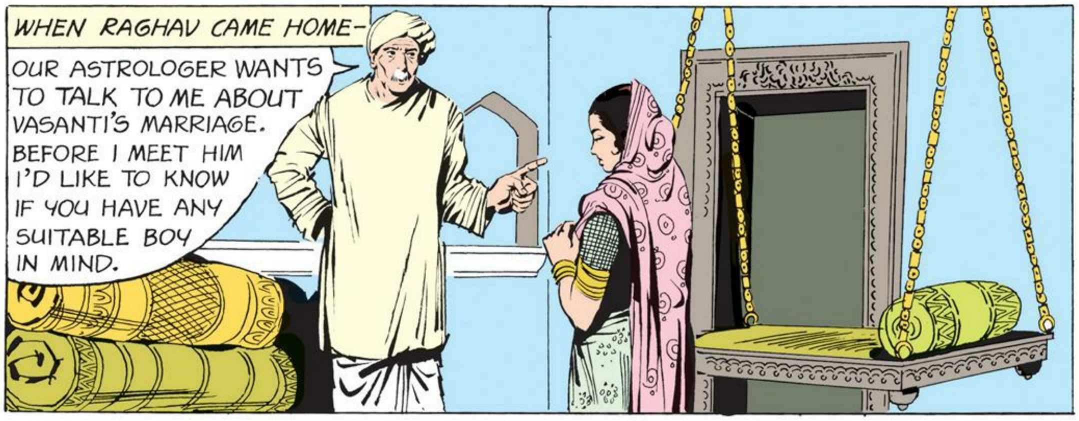
ONE DAY, THE VILLAGE NURSE CAME TO SEE HER MOTHER.

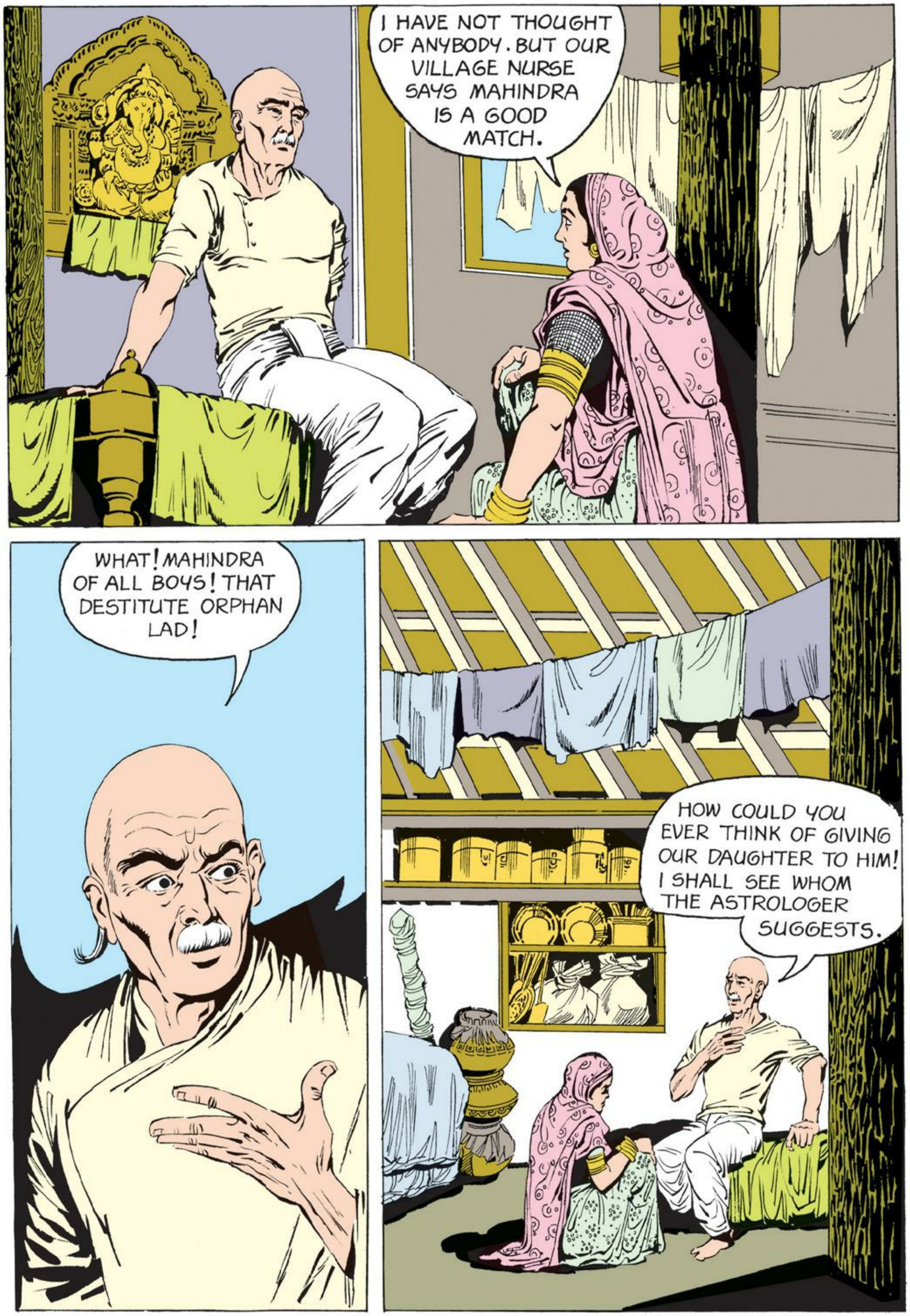

RADHABAI, WHY DON'T YOU GET VASANTI MARRIED TO MAHINDRA? HE IS A GOOD BOY AND HAS ALWAYS LIKED HER.

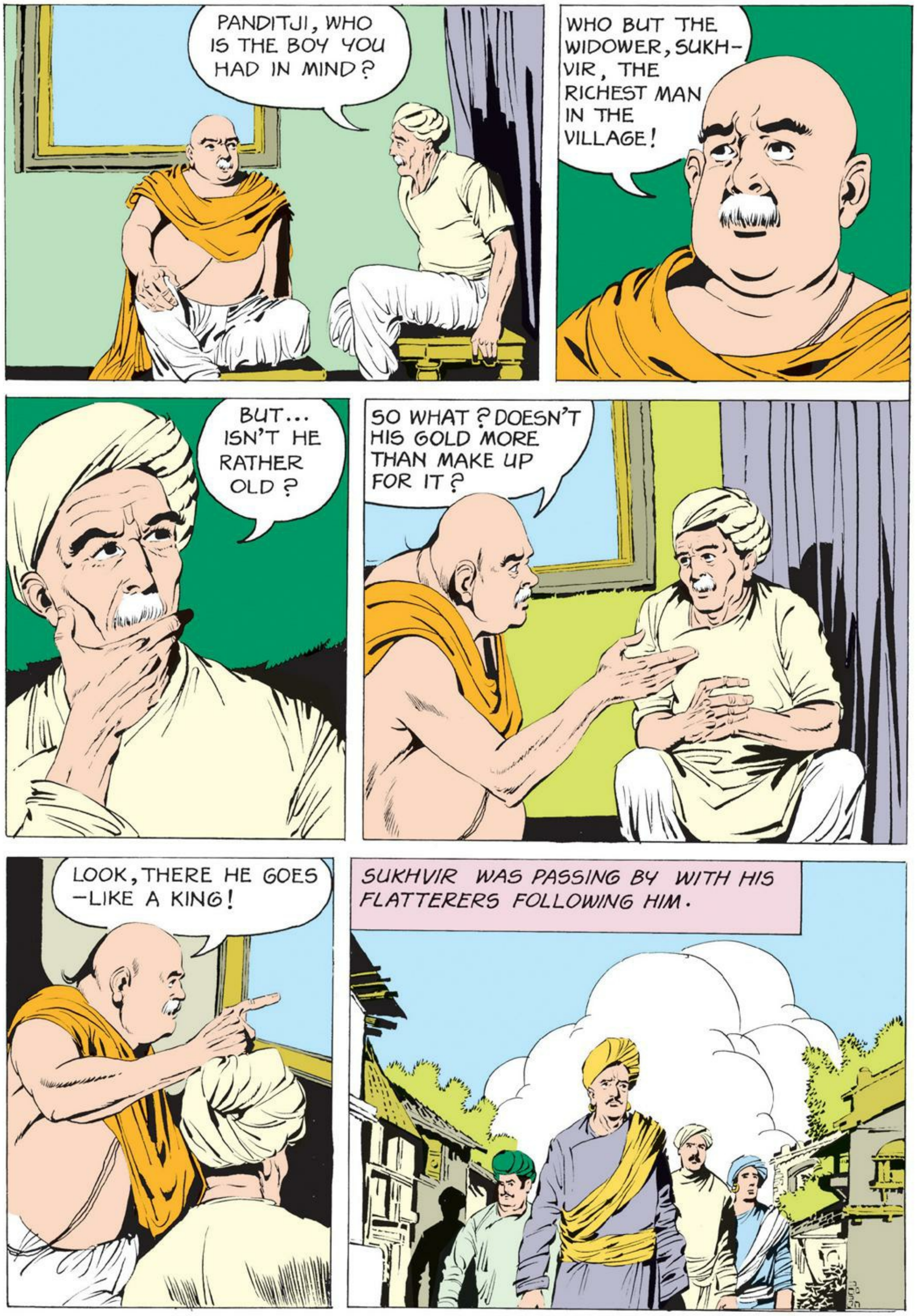
MEANWHILE THE VILLAGE ASTROLOGER MET RAGHAV.

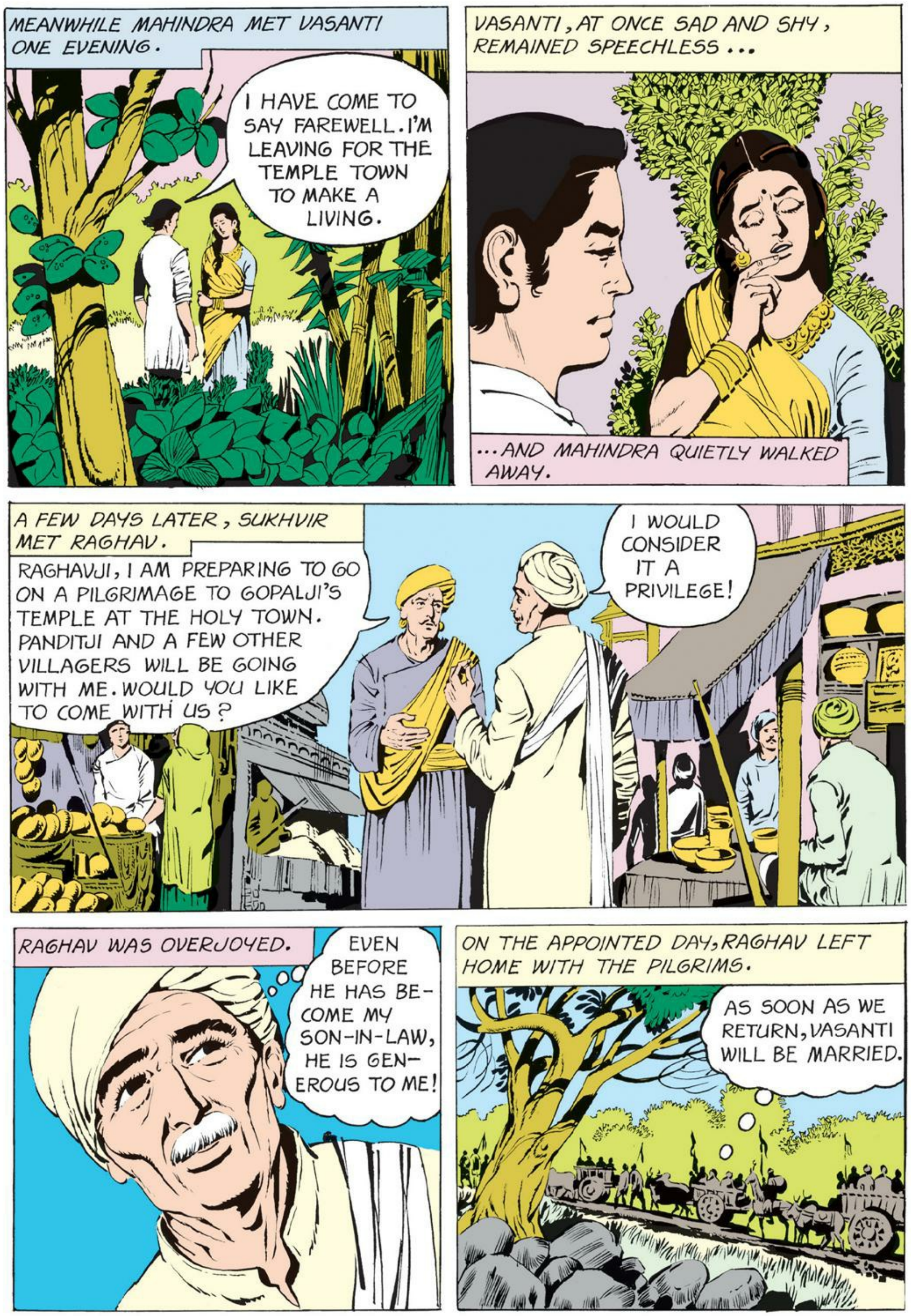

BHAYYA! I HAVE AN ELIGIBLE BRIDEGROOM IN MIND FOR VASANTI. COME TO MY HOUSE AND WE'LL TALK IT OVER.

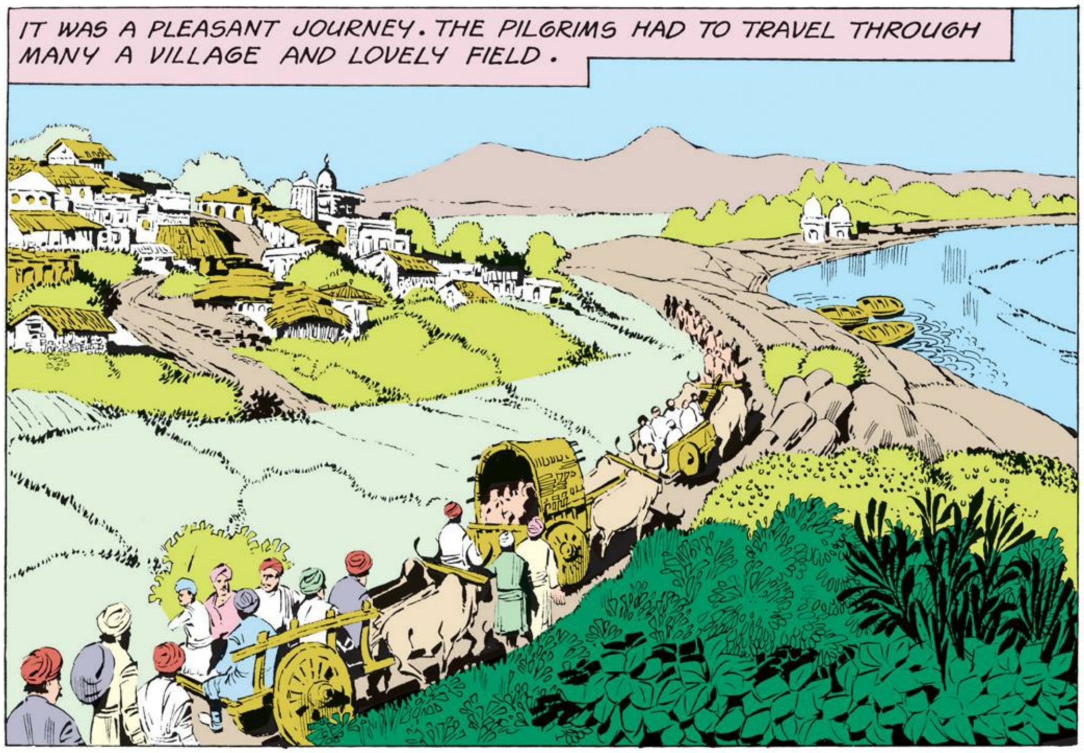
WHEN RAGHAV CAME HOME–

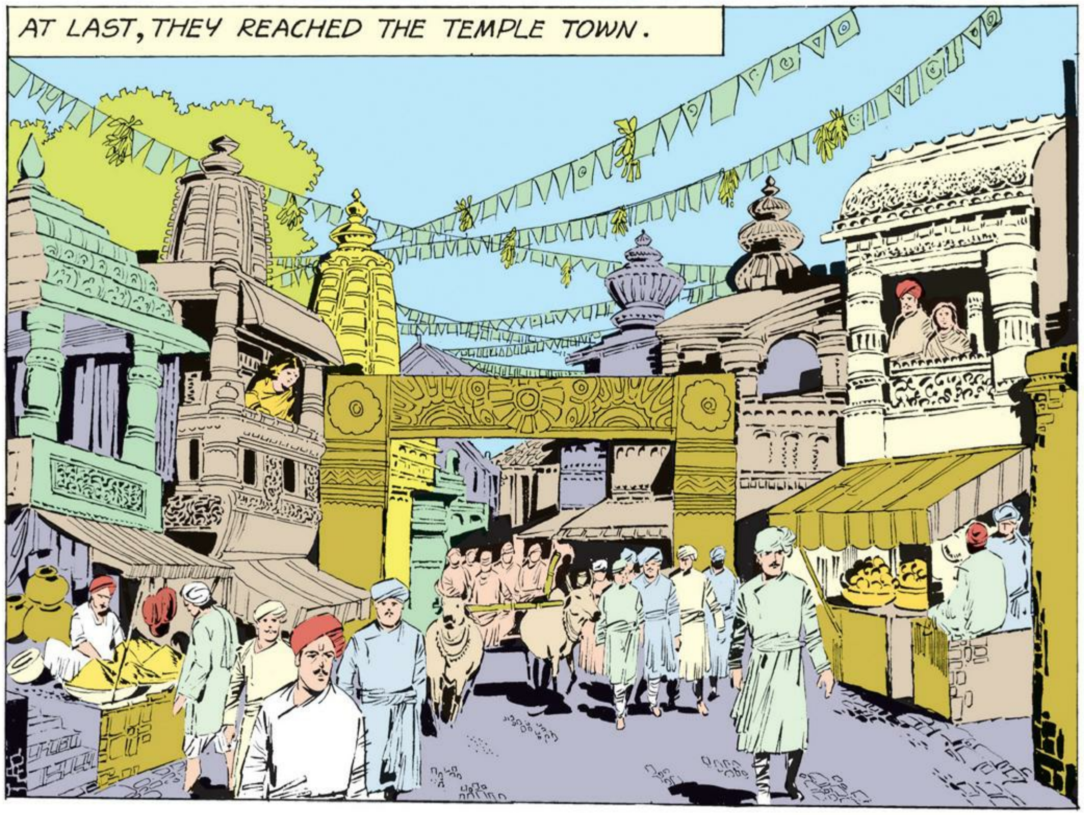

OUR ASTROLOGER WANTS TO TALK TO ME ABOUT VASANTI'S MARRIAGE. BEFORE I MEET HIM I'D LIKE TO KNOW IF YOU HAVE ANY SUITABLE BOY IN MIND.

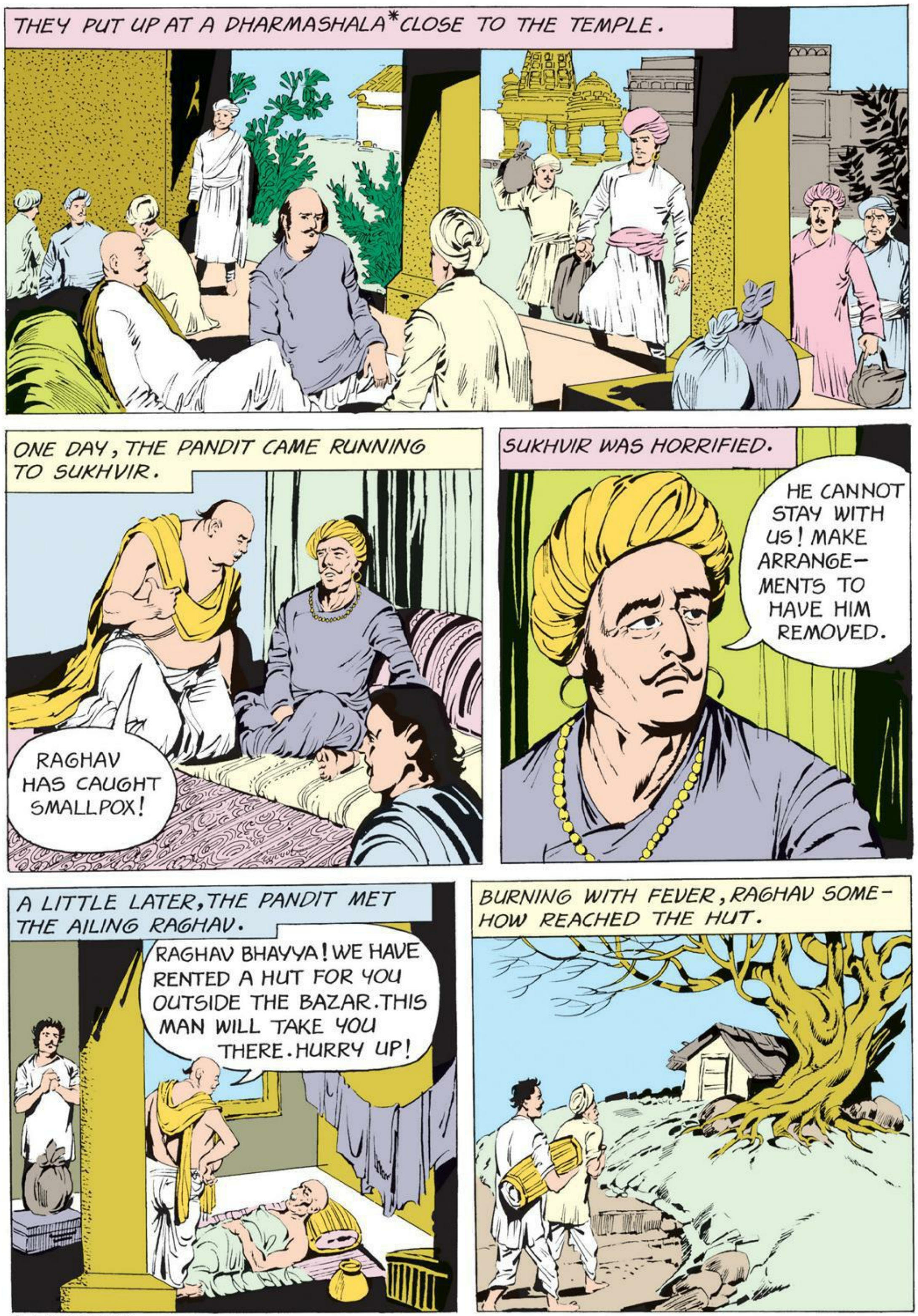

I HAVE NOT THOUGHT OF ANYBODY. BUT OUR VILLAGE NURSE SAYS MAHINDRA IS A GOOD MATCH.
WHAT! MAHINDRA OF ALL BOYS! THAT DESTITUTE ORPHAN LAD!
HOW COULD YOU EVER THINK OF GIVING OUR DAUGHTER TO HIM! I SHALL SEE WHOM THE ASTROLOGER SUGGESTS.


PANDITJI, WHO IS THE BOY YOU HAD IN MIND?
WHO BUT THE WIDOWER, SUKHVIR, THE RICHEST MAN IN THE VILLAGE!
BUT... ISN'T HE RATHER OLD?
SO WHAT? DOESN'T HIS GOLD MORE THAN MAKE UP FOR IT?
LOOK, THERE HE GOES —LIKE A KING!
SUKHVIR WAS PASSING BY WITH HIS FLATTERERS FOLLOWING HIM.

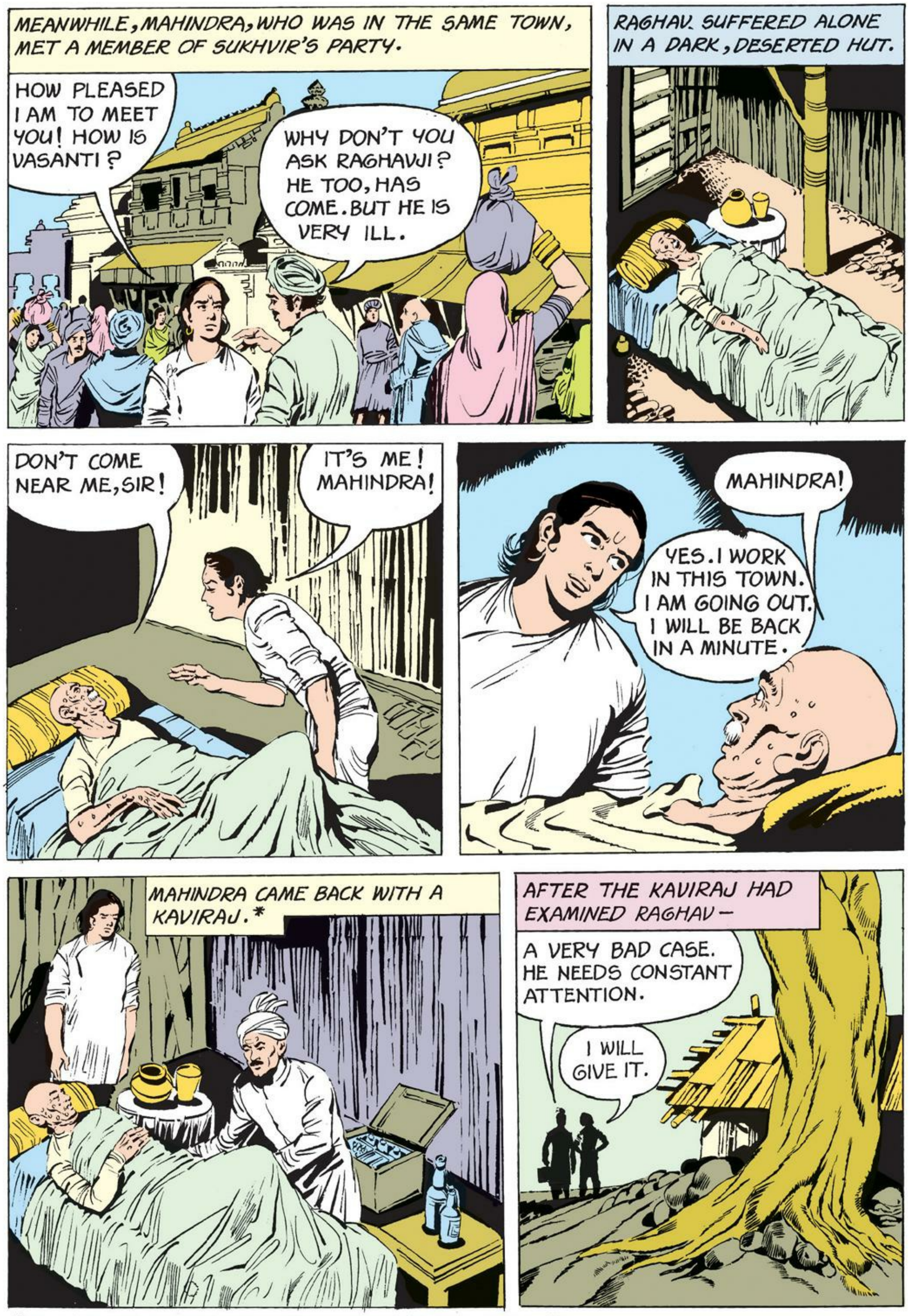

MEANWHILE MAHINDRA MET VASANTI ONE EVENING.
I HAVE COME TO SAY FAREWELL. I'M LEAVING FOR THE TEMPLE TOWN TO MAKE A LIVING.
VASANTI, AT ONCE SAD AND SHY, REMAINED SPEECHLESS ...
... AND MAHINDRA QUIETLY WALKED AWAY.
A FEW DAYS LATER, SUKHVIR MET RAGHAV.
RAGHAVJI, I AM PREPARING TO GO ON A PILGRIMAGE TO GOPALJI'S TEMPLE AT THE HOLY TOWN. PANDITJI AND A FEW OTHER VILLAGERS WILL BE GOING WITH ME. WOULD YOU LIKE TO COME WITH US?
I WOULD CONSIDER IT A PRIVILEGE!
RAGHAV WAS OVERJOYED.
EVEN BEFORE HE HAS BECOME MY SON-IN-LAW, HE IS GENEROUS TO ME!
ON THE APPOINTED DAY, RAGHAV LEFT HOME WITH THE PILGRIMS.
AS SOON AS WE RETURN, VASANTI WILL BE MARRIED.


IT WAS A PLEASANT JOURNEY. THE PILGRIMS HAD TO TRAVEL THROUGH MANY A VILLAGE AND LOVELY FIELD.


AT LAST, THEY REACHED THE TEMPLE TOWN.


THEY PUT UP AT A DHARMASHALA* CLOSE TO THE TEMPLE.
ONE DAY, THE PANDIT CAME RUNNING TO SUKHVIR.
RAGHAV HAS CAUGHT SMALLPOX!
SUKHVIR WAS HORRIFIED.
HE CANNOT STAY WITH US! MAKE ARRANGEMENTS TO HAVE HIM REMOVED.
A LITTLE LATER, THE PANDIT MET THE AILING RAGHAV.
RAGHAV BHAYYA! WE HAVE RENTED A HUT FOR YOU OUTSIDE THE BAZAR. THIS MAN WILL TAKE YOU THERE. HURRY UP!
BURNING WITH FEVER, RAGHAV SOMEHOW REACHED THE HUT.

* FREE INN


MEANWHILE, MAHINDRA, WHO WAS IN THE SAME TOWN, MET A MEMBER OF SUKHVIR'S PARTY.
HOW PLEASED I AM TO MEET YOU! HOW IS VASANTI?
WHY DON'T YOU ASK RAGHAVJI? HE TOO, HAS COME. BUT HE IS VERY ILL.
RAGHAV SUFFERED ALONE IN A DARK, DESERTED HUT.
DON'T COME NEAR ME, SIR!
IT'S ME! MAHINDRA!
MAHINDRA!
YES. I WORK IN THIS TOWN. I AM GOING OUT. I WILL BE BACK IN A MINUTE.
MAHINDRA CAME BACK WITH A KAVIRAJ.*
AFTER THE KAVIRAJ HAD EXAMINED RAGHAV—
A VERY BAD CASE. HE NEEDS CONSTANT ATTENTION.
I WILL GIVE IT.

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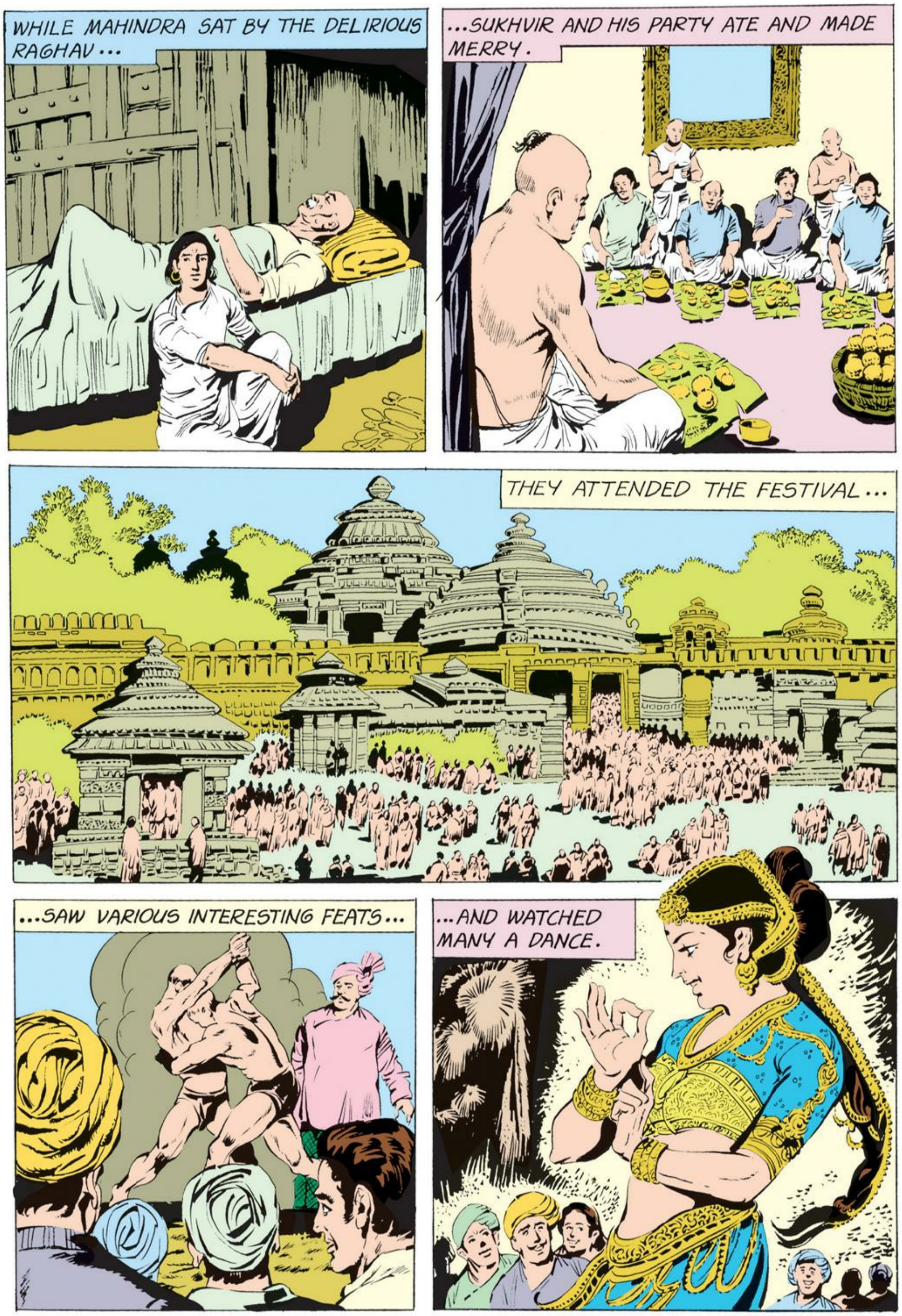
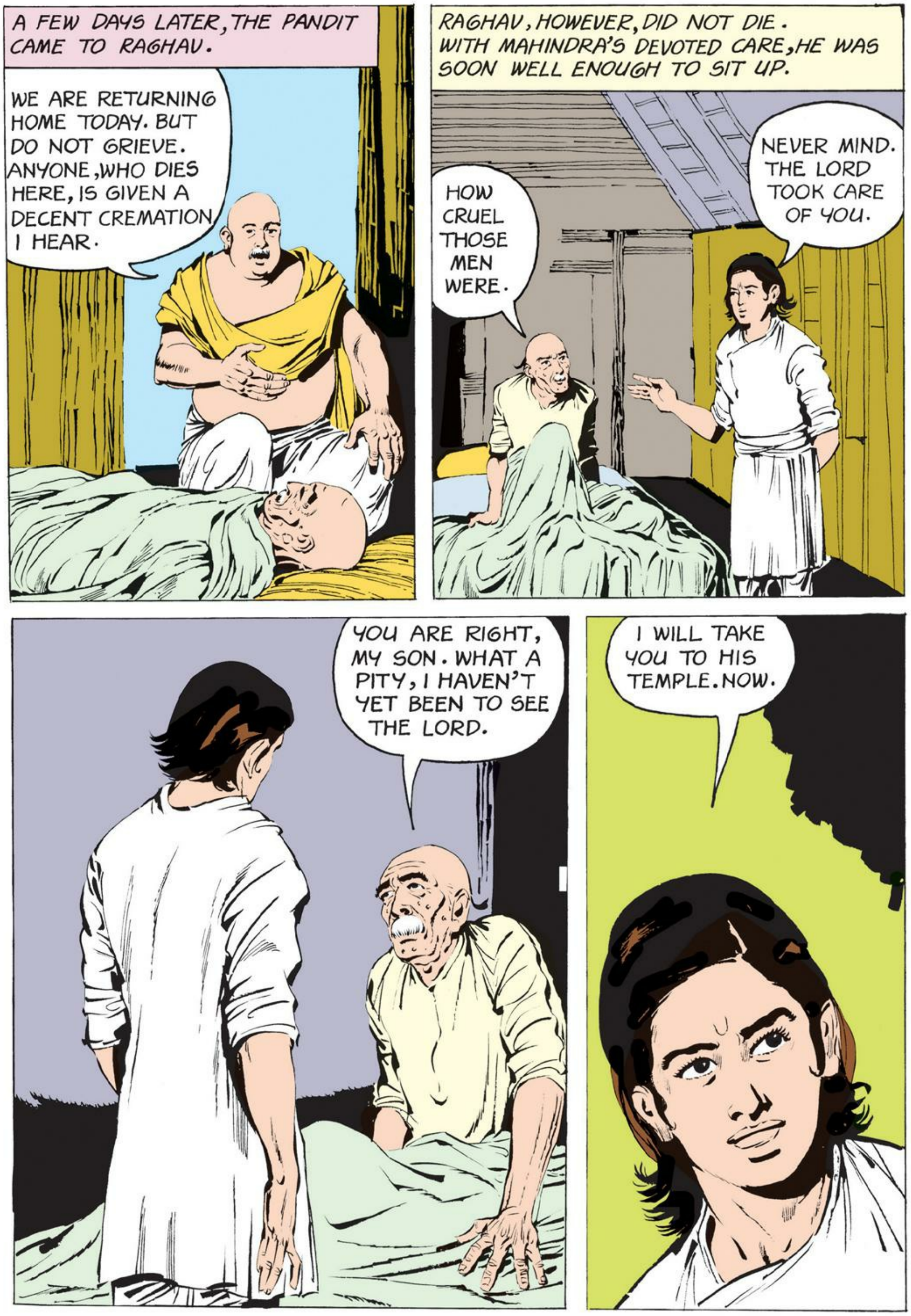
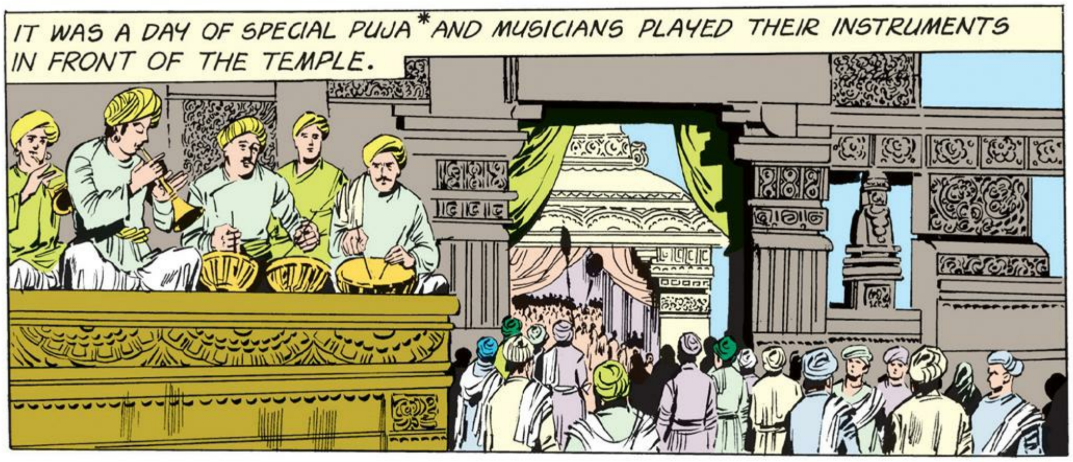
* A PHYSICIAN WELL-VERSED IN AYURVEDIC MEDICINE.

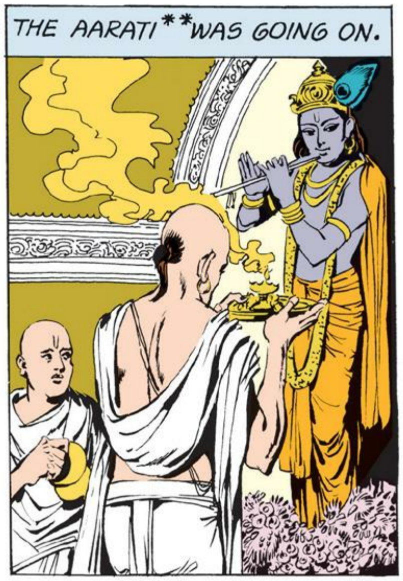

WHILE MAHINDRA SAT BY THE DELIRIOUS RAGHAV...
...SUKHVIR AND HIS PARTY ATE AND MADE MERRY.
THEY ATTENDED THE FESTIVAL...
...SAW VARIOUS INTERESTING FEATS...
...AND WATCHED MANY A DANCE.


A FEW DAYS LATER, THE PANDIT CAME TO RAGHAV.
WE ARE RETURNING HOME TODAY. BUT DO NOT GRIEVE. ANYONE, WHO DIES HERE, IS GIVEN A DECENT CREMATION I HEAR.
RAGHAV, HOWEVER, DID NOT DIE. WITH MAHINDRA'S DEVOTED CARE, HE WAS SOON WELL ENOUGH TO SIT UP.
HOW CRUEL THOSE MEN WERE.
NEVER MIND. THE LORD TOOK CARE OF YOU.
YOU ARE RIGHT, MY SON. WHAT A PITY, I HAVEN'T YET BEEN TO SEE THE LORD.
I WILL TAKE YOU TO HIS TEMPLE. NOW.

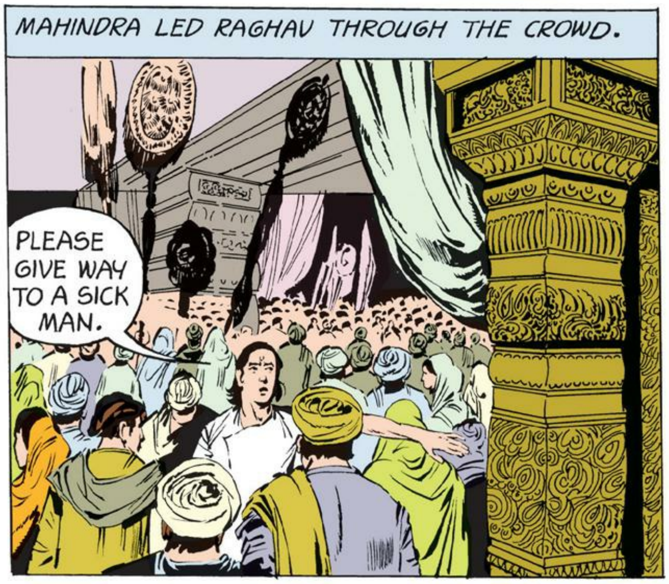
IT WAS A DAY OF SPECIAL PUJA* AND MUSICIANS PLAYED THEIR INSTRUMENTS IN FRONT OF THE TEMPLE.



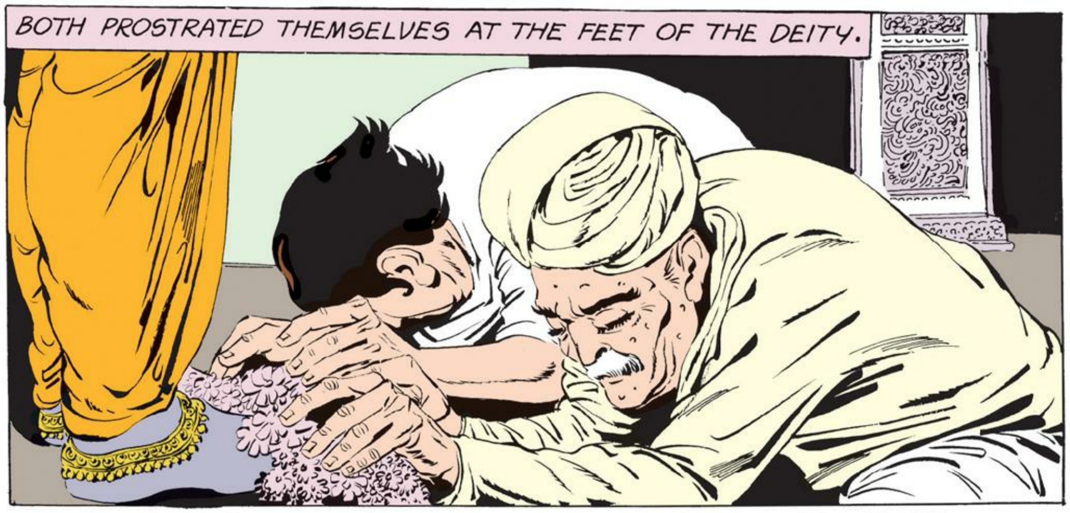
THE AARATI** WAS GOING ON.



MAHINDRA LED RAGHAV THROUGH THE CROWD.


PLEASE GIVE WAY TO A SICK MAN.

BOTH PROSTRATED THEMSELVES AT THE FEET OF THE DEITY.



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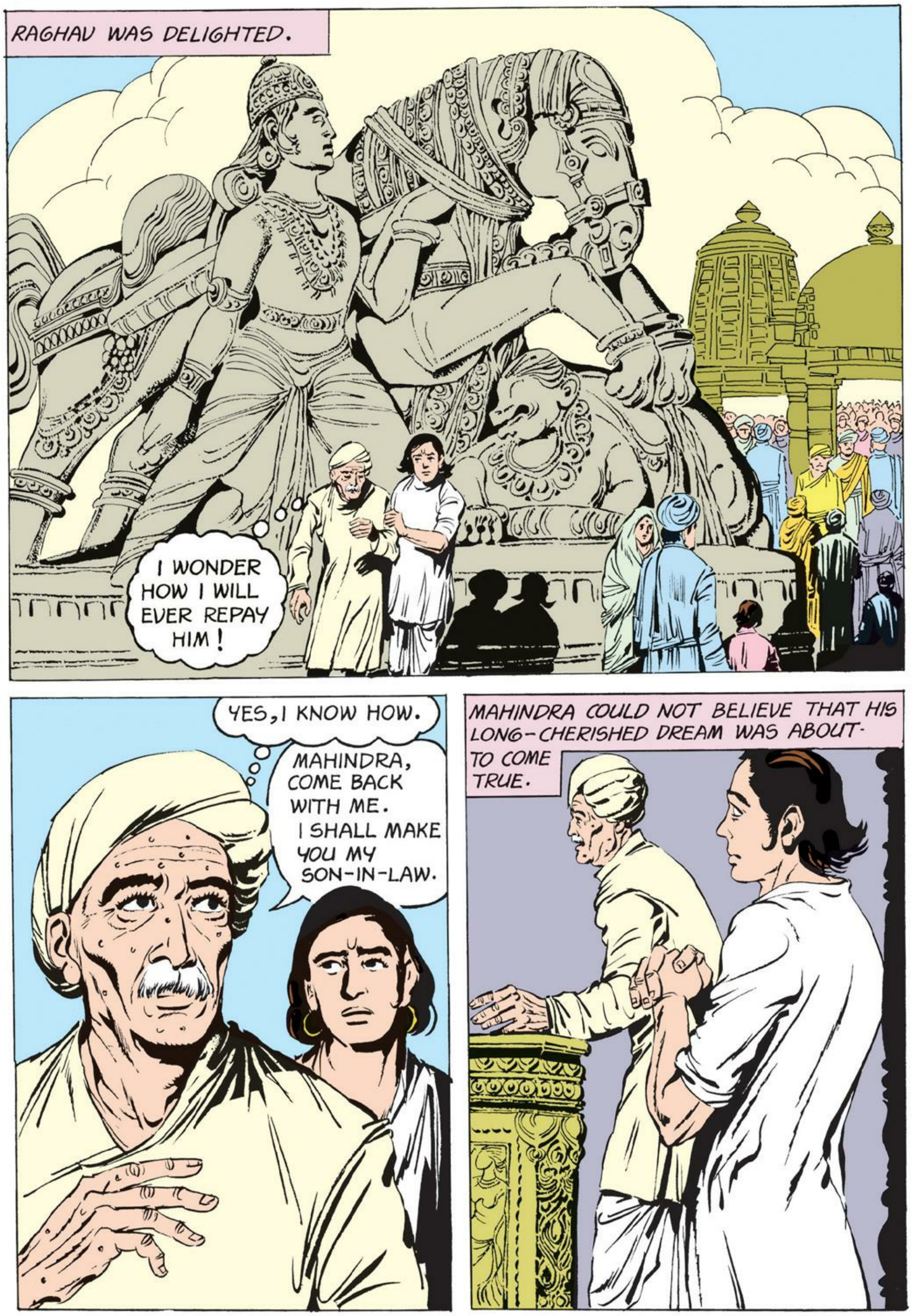
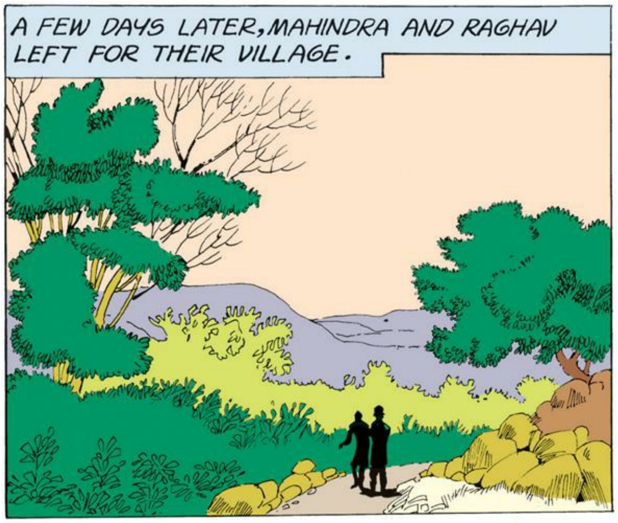
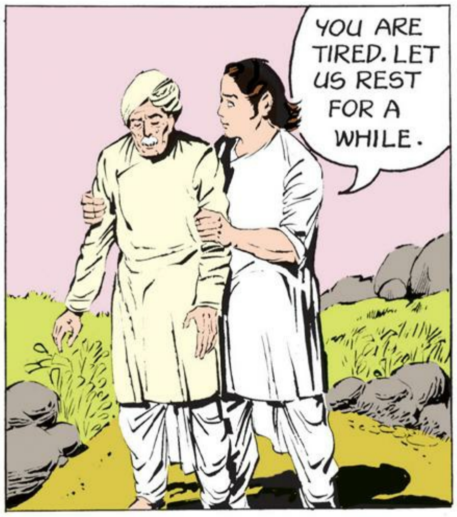
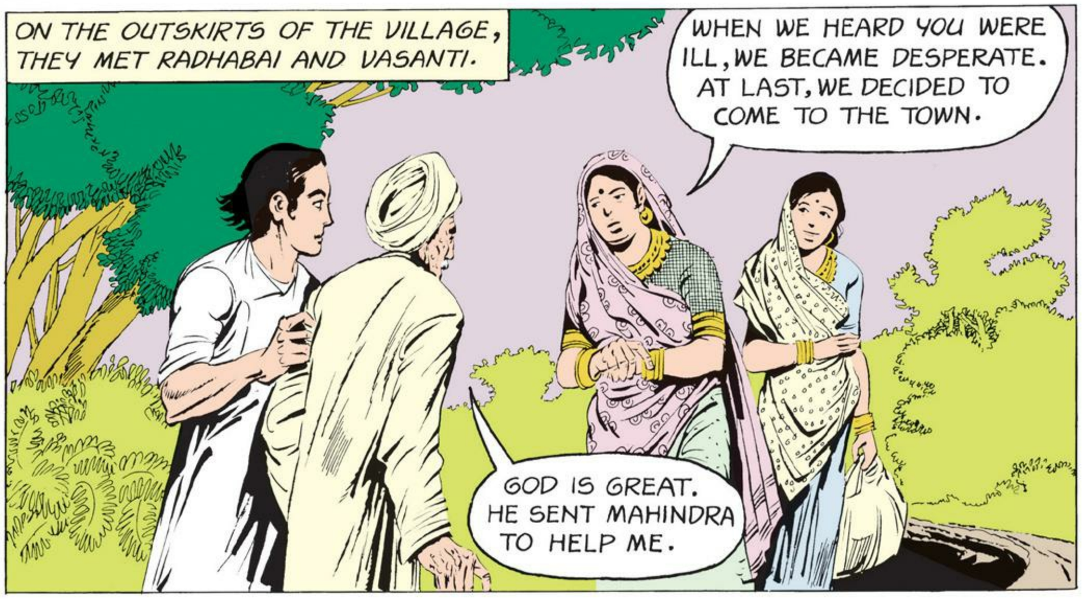
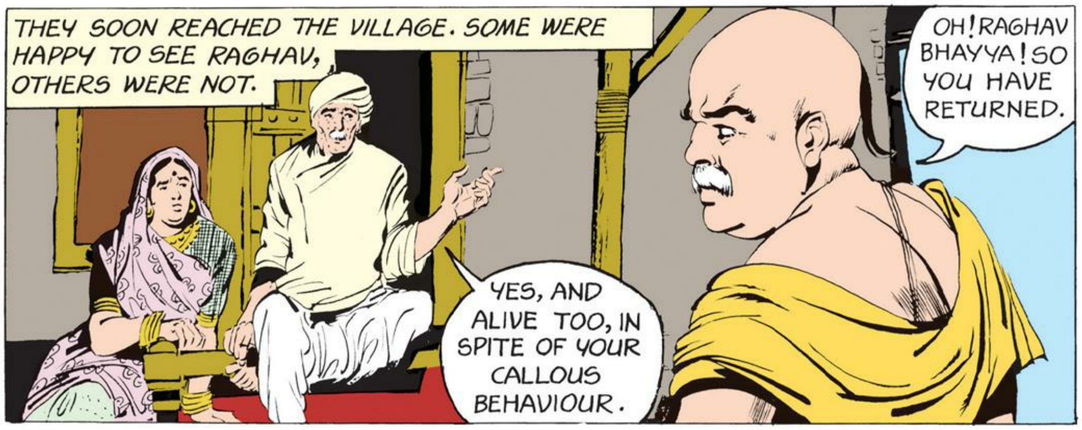
* RITUAL WORSHIP OF A DEITY. ** THE CONCLUDING RITE OF THE WORSHIP.

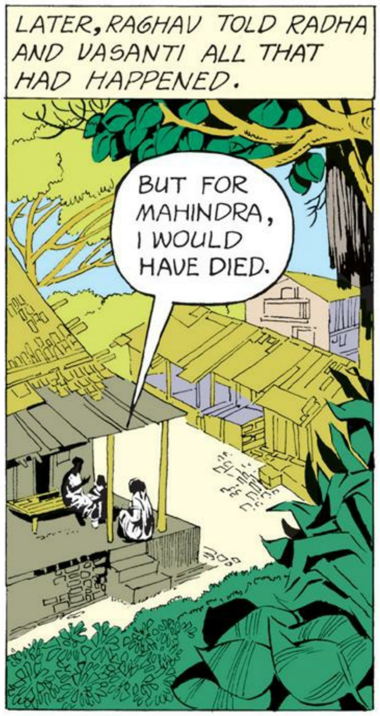

RAGHAV WAS DELIGHTED.
I WONDER HOW I WILL EVER REPAY HIM!
YES, I KNOW HOW.
MAHINDRA, COME BACK WITH ME. I SHALL MAKE YOU MY SON-IN-LAW.
MAHINDRA COULD NOT BELIEVE THAT HIS LONG-CHERISHED DREAM WAS ABOUT TO COME TRUE.

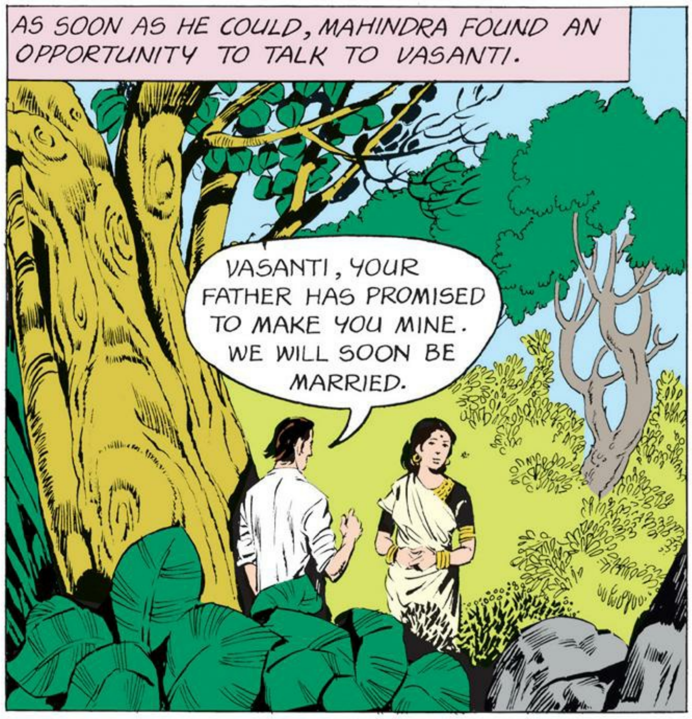

A FEW DAYS LATER, MAHINDRA AND RAGHAV LEFT FOR THEIR VILLAGE.

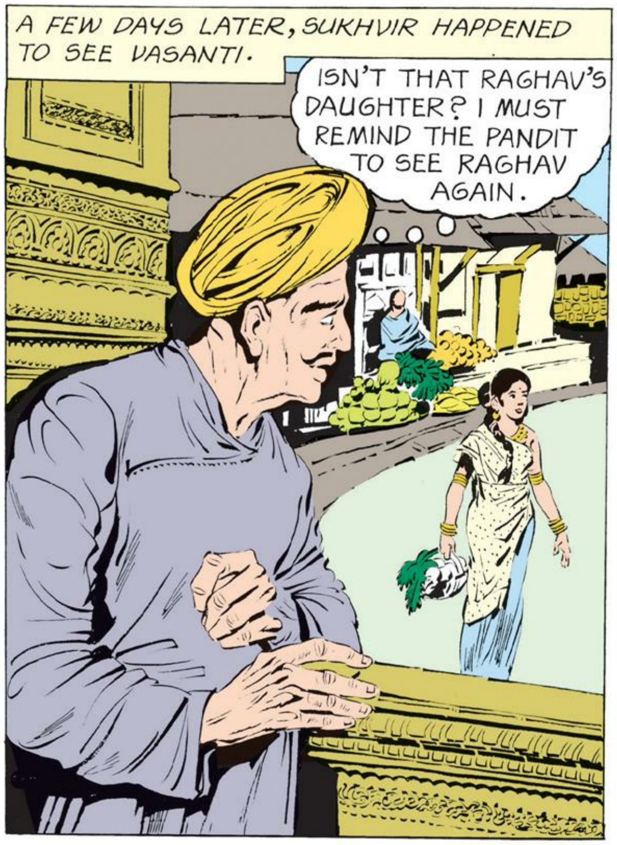

YOU ARE TIRED. LET US REST FOR A WHILE.

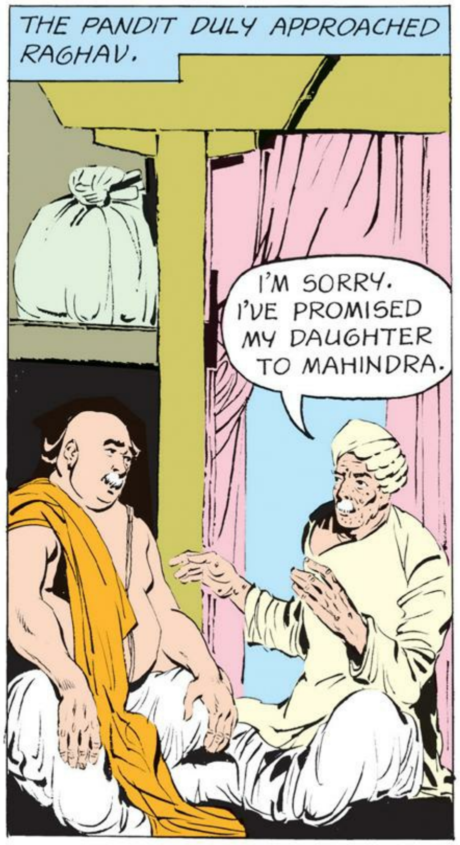

ON THE OUTSKIRTS OF THE VILLAGE, THEY MET RADHABAI AND VASANTI.
WHEN WE HEARD YOU WERE ILL, WE BECAME DESPERATE. AT LAST, WE DECIDED TO COME TO THE TOWN.
GOD IS GREAT. HE SENT MAHINDRA TO HELP ME.

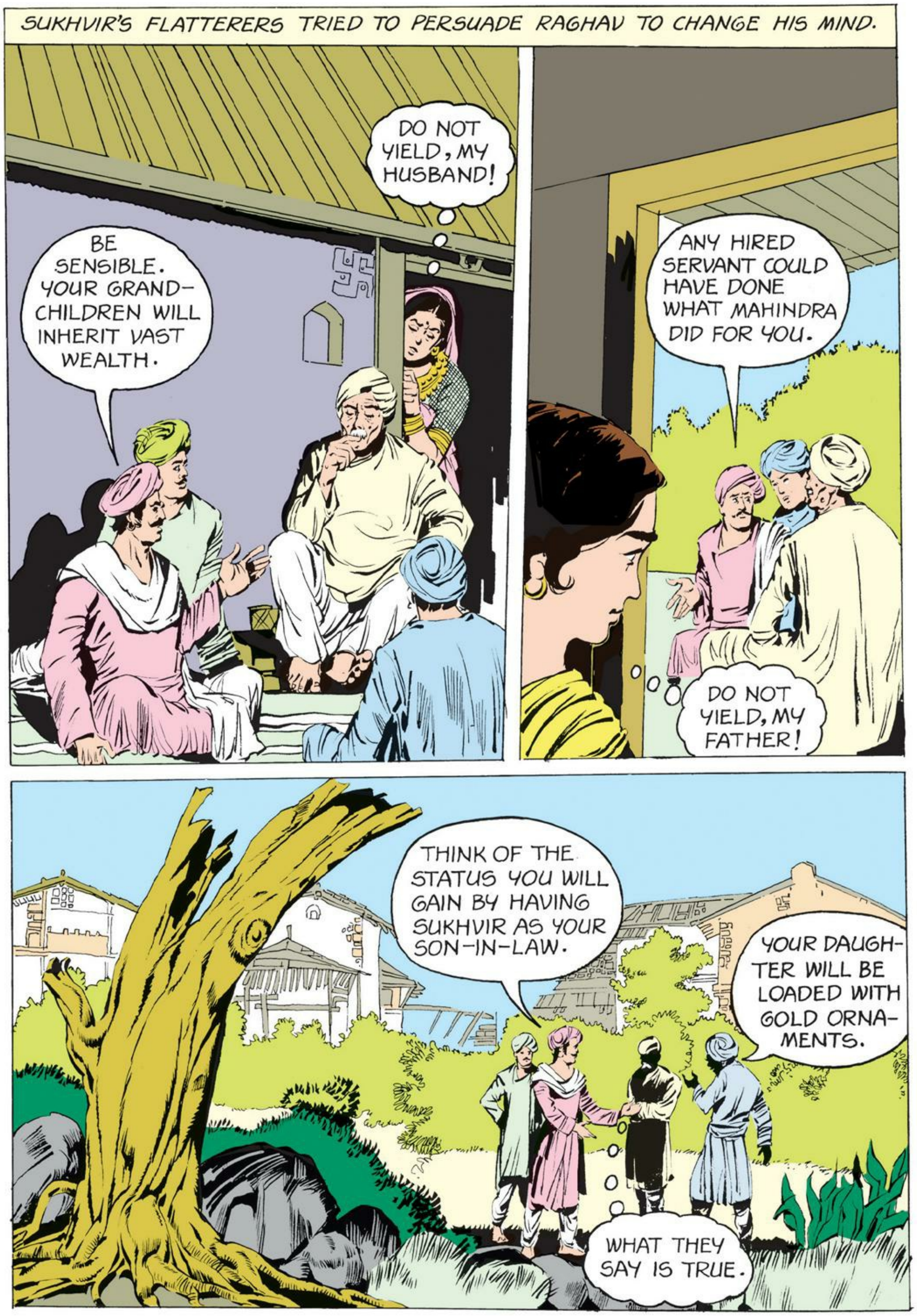

THEY SOON REACHED THE VILLAGE. SOME WERE HAPPY TO SEE RAGHAV, OTHERS WERE NOT.
OH! RAGHAV BHAYYA! SO YOU HAVE RETURNED.
YES, AND ALIVE TOO, IN SPITE OF YOUR CALLOUS BEHAVIOUR.

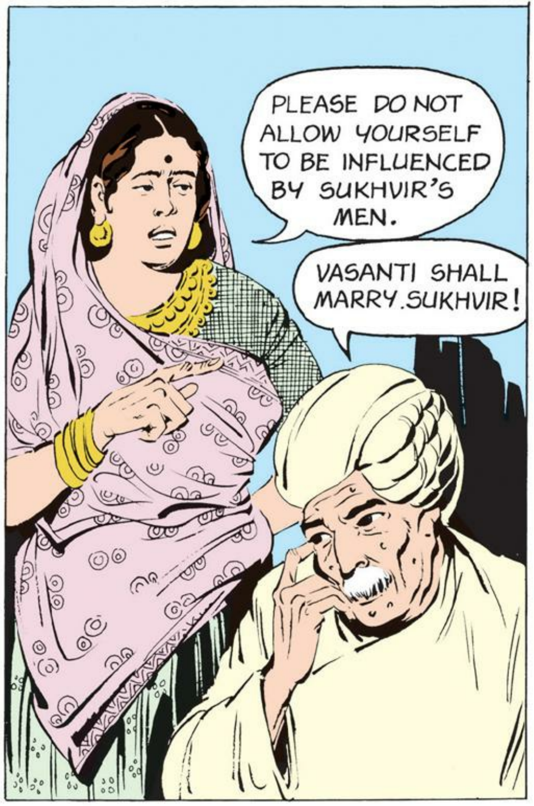

LATER, RAGHAV TOLD RADHA AND VASANTI ALL THAT HAD HAPPENED.
BUT FOR MAHINDRA, I WOULD HAVE DIED.

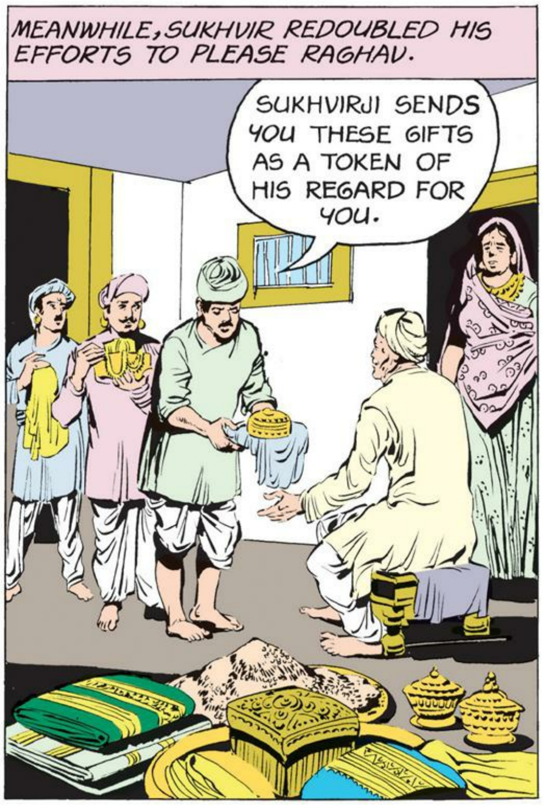

AS SOON AS HE COULD, MAHINDRA FOUND AN OPPORTUNITY TO TALK TO VASANTI.
VASANTI, YOUR FATHER HAS PROMISED TO MAKE YOU MINE. WE WILL SOON BE MARRIED.

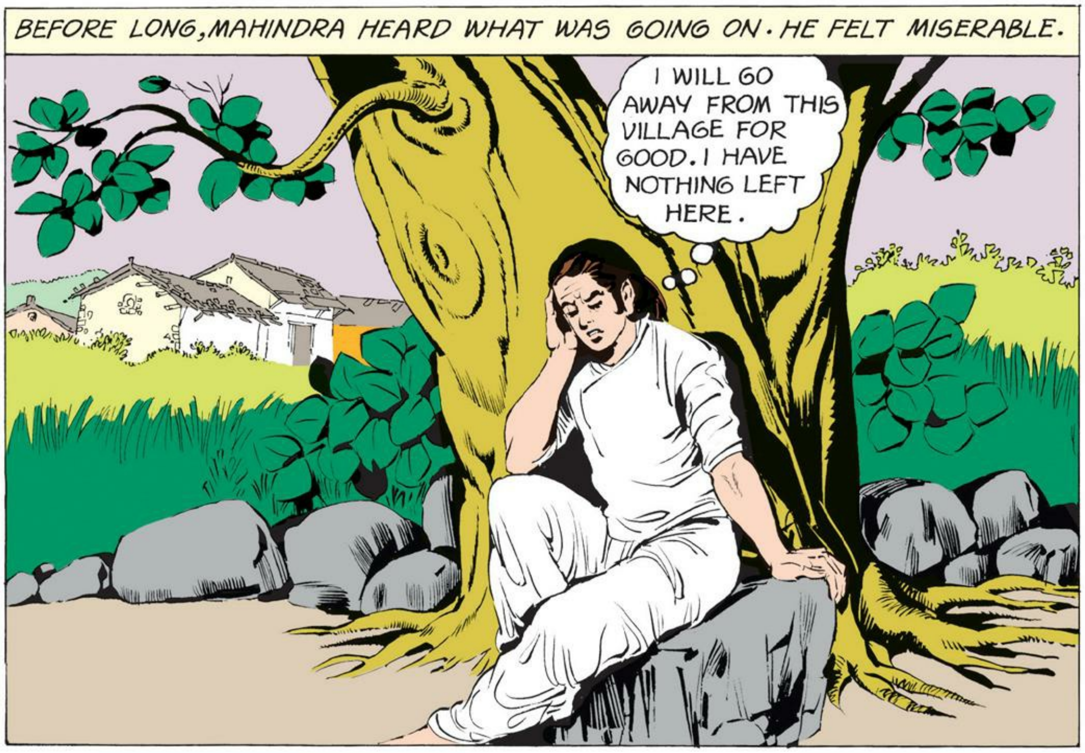

A FEW DAYS LATER, SUKHVIR HAPPENED TO SEE VASANTI.
ISN'T THAT RAGHAV'S DAUGHTER? I MUST REMIND THE PANDIT TO SEE RAGHAV AGAIN.

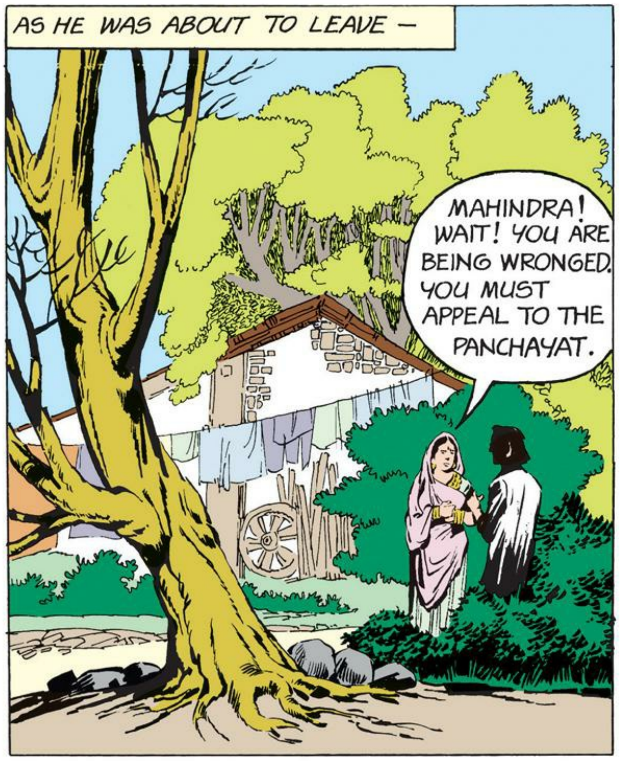

THE PANDIT DULY APPROACHED RAGHAV.
I'M SORRY. I'VE PROMISED MY DAUGHTER TO MAHINDRA.

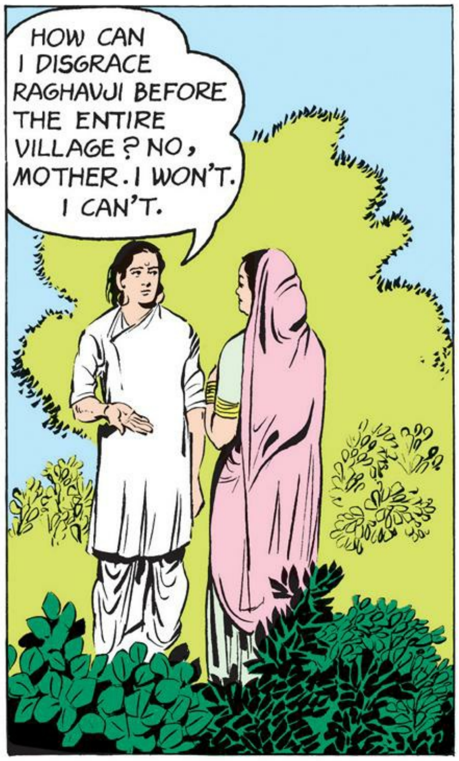

SUKHVIR'S FLATTERERS TRIED TO PERSUADE RAGHAV TO CHANGE HIS MIND.
DO NOT YIELD, MY HUSBAND!
BE SENSIBLE. YOUR GRAND-CHILDREN WILL INHERIT VAST WEALTH.
ANY HIRED SERVANT COULD HAVE DONE WHAT MAHINDRA DID FOR YOU.
DO NOT YIELD, MY FATHER!
THINK OF THE STATUS YOU WILL GAIN BY HAVING SUKHVIR AS YOUR SON-IN-LAW.
YOUR DAUGHTER WILL BE LOADED WITH GOLD ORNAMENTS.
WHAT THEY SAY IS TRUE.

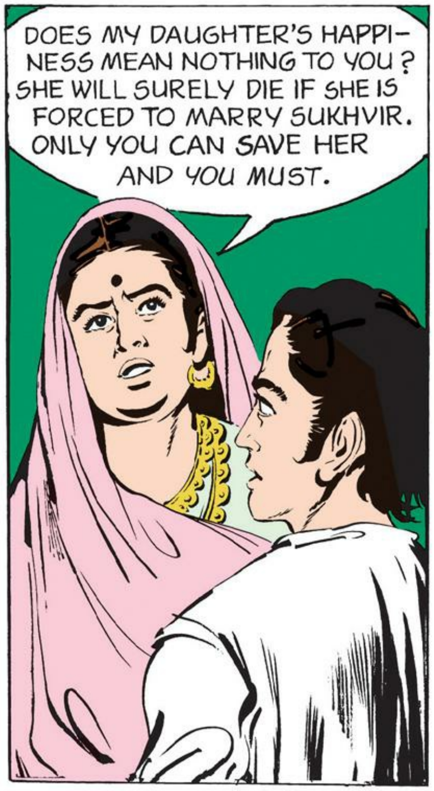

PLEASE DO NOT ALLOW YOURSELF TO BE INFLUENCED BY SUKHVIR'S MEN.
VASANTI SHALL MARRY SUKHVIR!

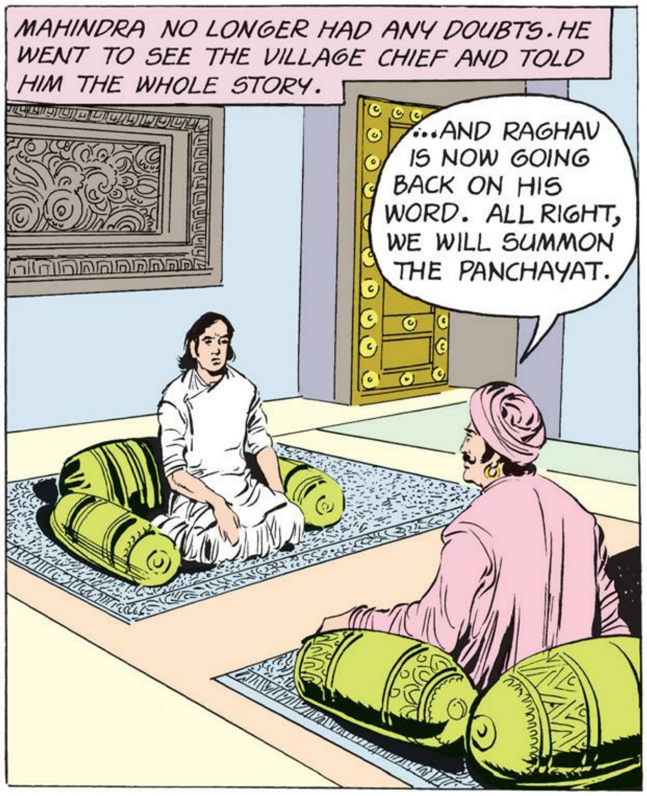

MEANWHILE, SUKHVIR REDOUBLED HIS EFFORTS TO PLEASE RAGHAV.
SUKHVIRJI SENDS YOU THESE GIFTS AS A TOKEN OF HIS REGARD FOR YOU.

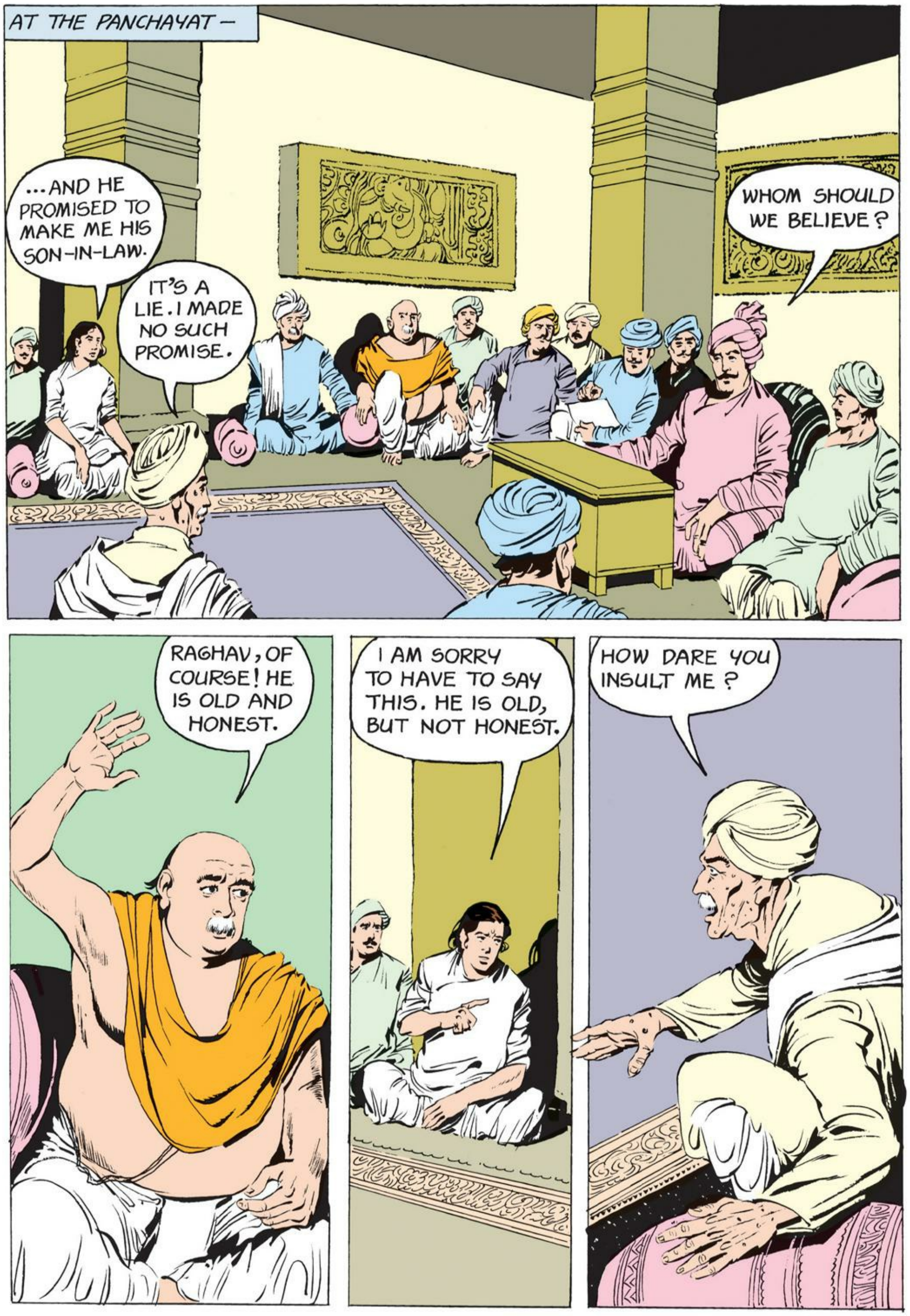

BEFORE LONG, MAHINDRA HEARD WHAT WAS GOING ON. HE FELT MISERABLE.
I WILL GO AWAY FROM THIS VILLAGE FOR GOOD. I HAVE NOTHING LEFT HERE.

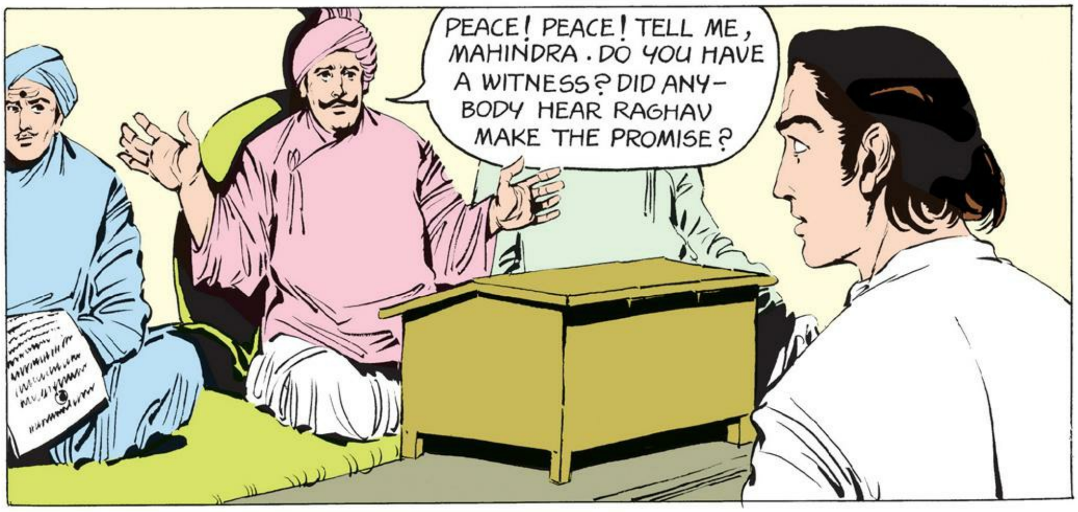

AS HE WAS ABOUT TO LEAVE —
MAHINDRA! WAIT! YOU ARE BEING WRONGED. YOU MUST APPEAL TO THE PANCHAYAT.

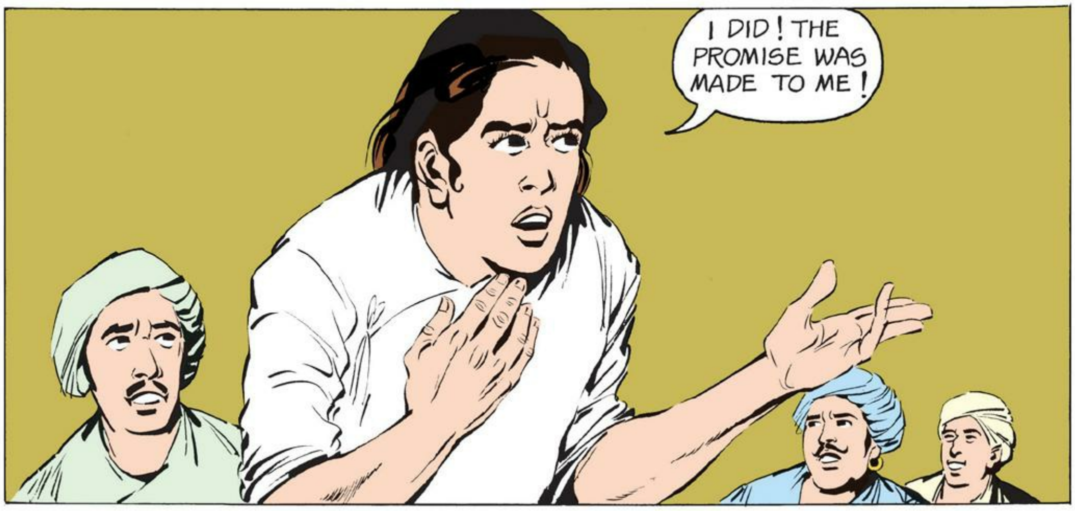

HOW CAN I DISGRACE RAGHAVJI BEFORE THE ENTIRE VILLAGE? NO, MOTHER. I WON'T. I CAN'T.

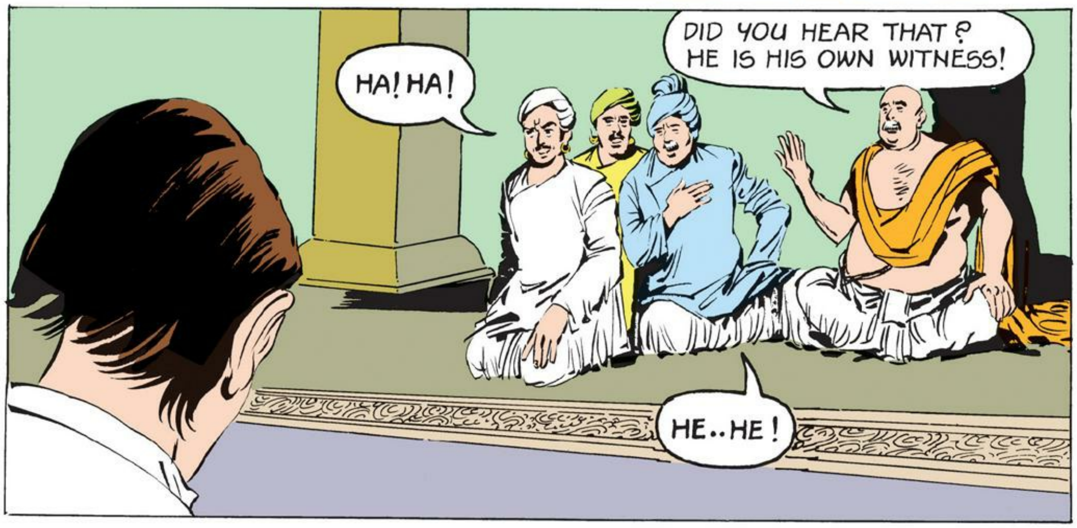

DOES MY DAUGHTER'S HAPPINESS MEAN NOTHING TO YOU? SHE WILL SURELY DIE IF SHE IS FORCED TO MARRY SUKHVIR. ONLY YOU CAN SAVE HER AND YOU MUST.

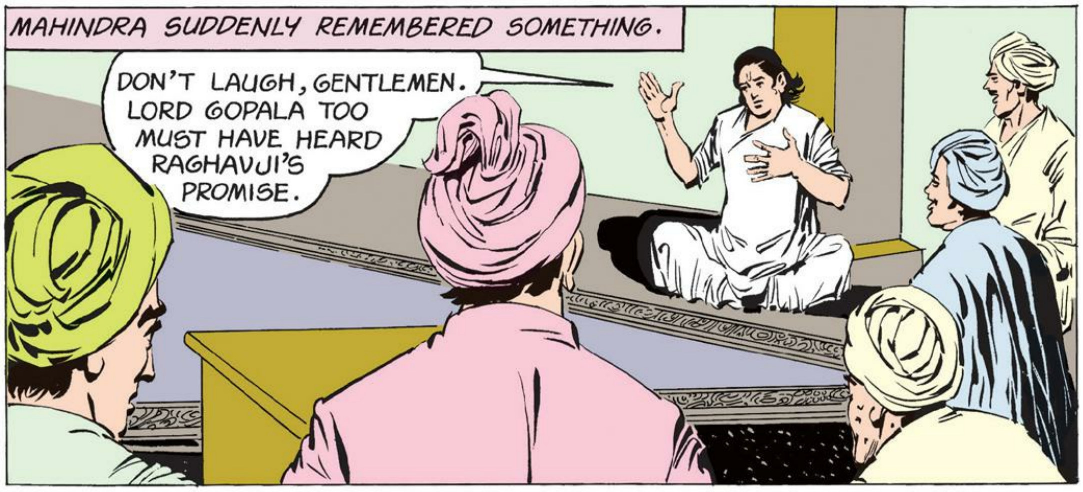

MAHINDRA NO LONGER HAD ANY DOUBTS. HE WENT TO SEE THE VILLAGE CHIEF AND TOLD HIM THE WHOLE STORY.
...AND RAGHAV IS NOW GOING BACK ON HIS WORD. ALL RIGHT, WE WILL SUMMON THE PANCHAYAT.

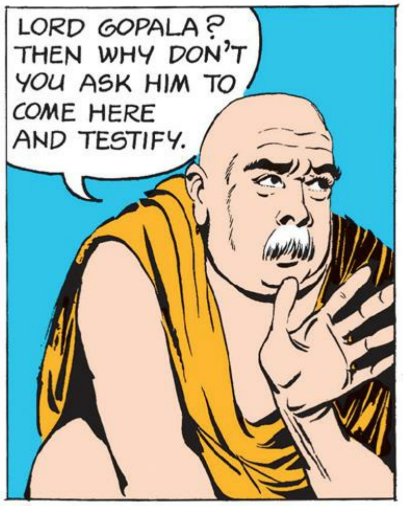

AT THE PANCHAYAT—
...AND HE PROMISED TO MAKE ME HIS SON-IN-LAW.
IT'S A LIE. I MADE NO SUCH PROMISE.
WHOM SHOULD WE BELIEVE?
RAGHAV, OF COURSE! HE IS OLD AND HONEST.
I AM SORRY TO HAVE TO SAY THIS. HE IS OLD, BUT NOT HONEST.
HOW DARE YOU INSULT ME?

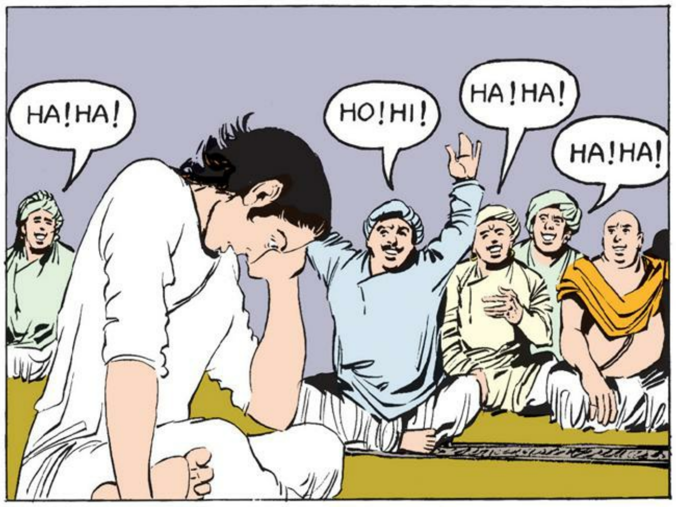

PEACE! PEACE! TELL ME, MAHINDRA. DO YOU HAVE A WITNESS? DID ANYBODY HEAR RAGHAV MAKE THE PROMISE?

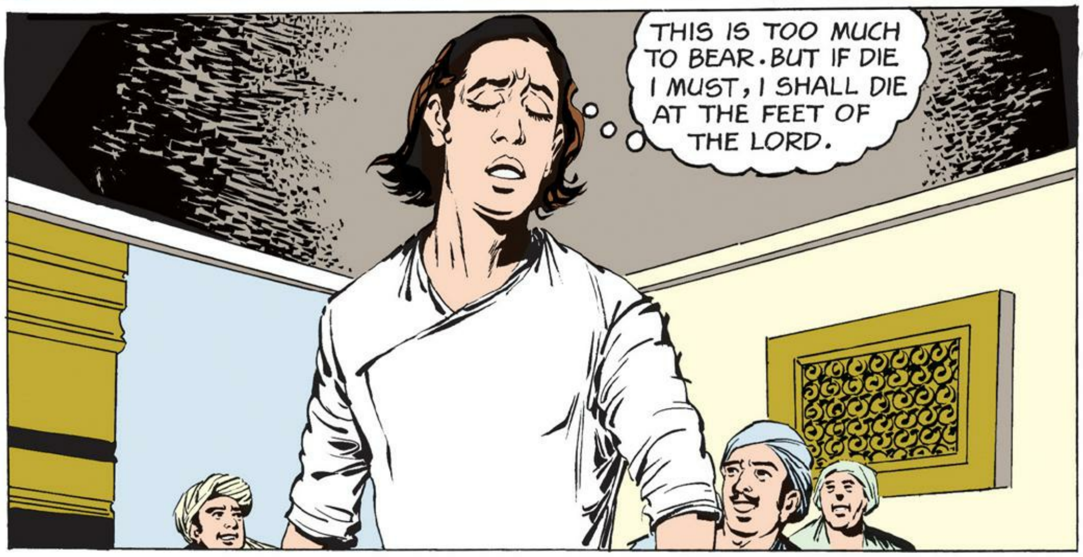

I DID! THE PROMISE WAS MADE TO ME!

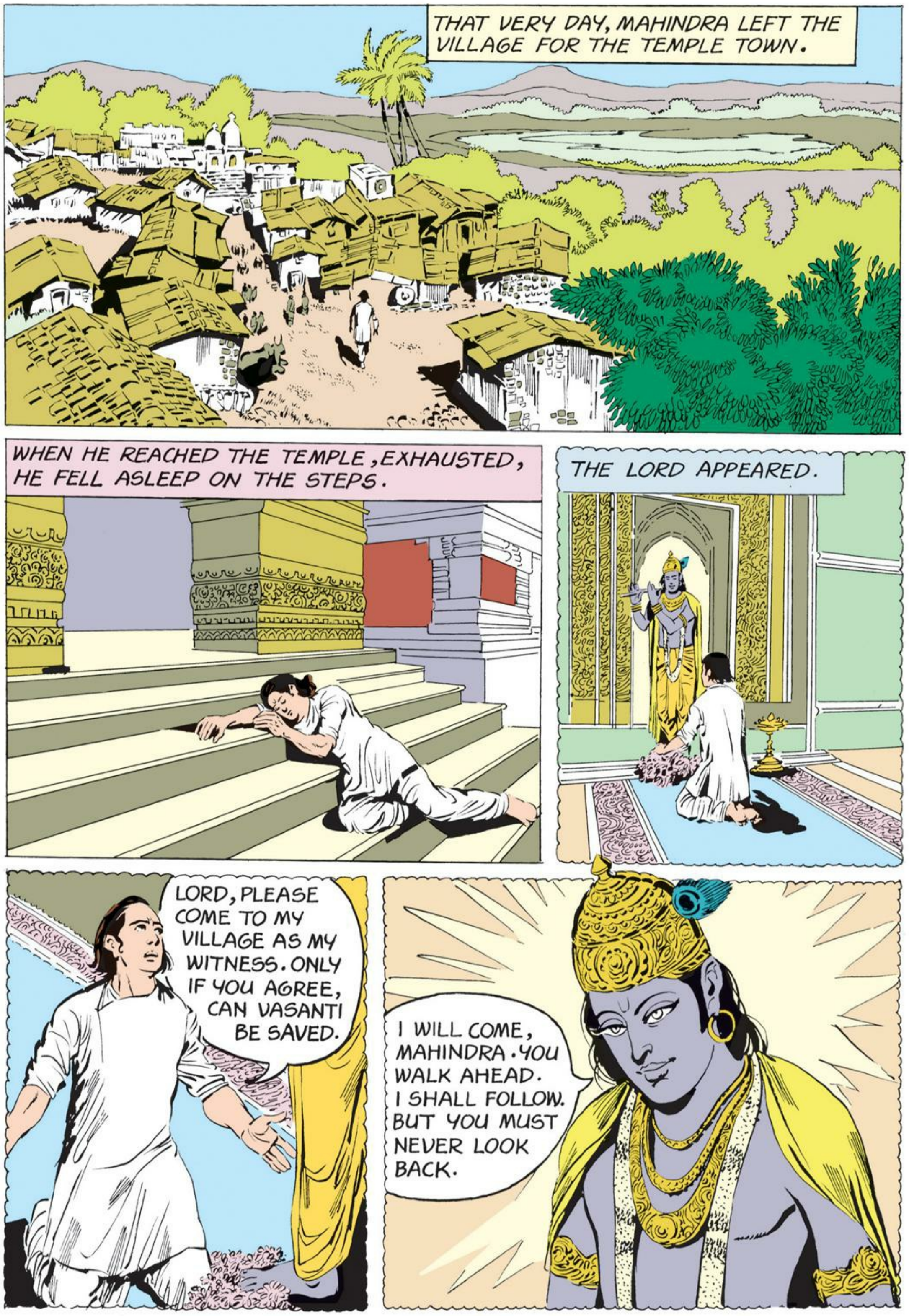

HA! HA!
DID YOU HEAR THAT? HE IS HIS OWN WITNESS!
HE..HE!

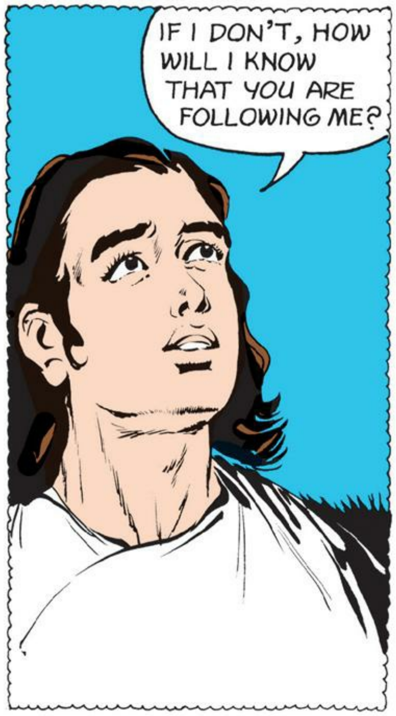

MAHINDRA SUDDENLY REMEMBERED SOMETHING.
DON'T LAUGH, GENTLEMEN. LORD GOPALA TOO MUST HAVE HEARD RAGHAVJI'S PROMISE.

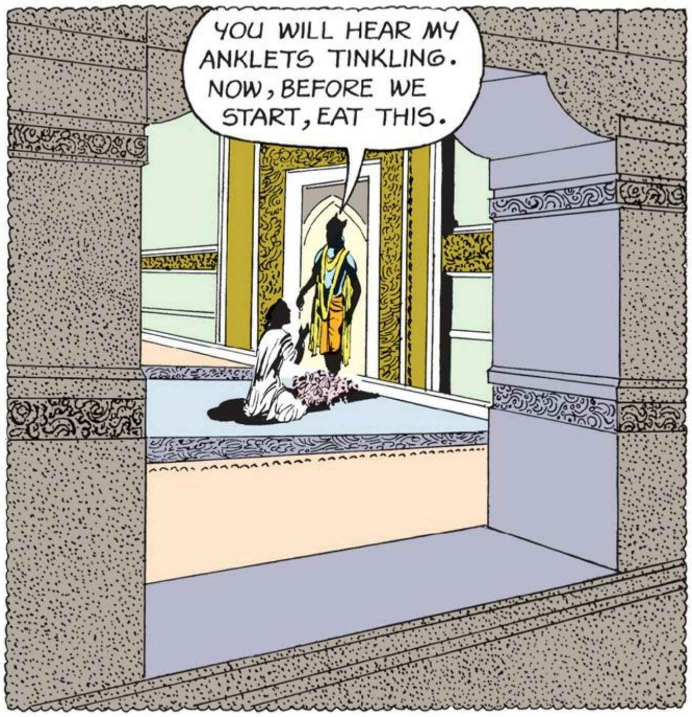

LORD GOPALA? THEN WHY DON'T YOU ASK HIM TO COME HERE AND TESTIFY.

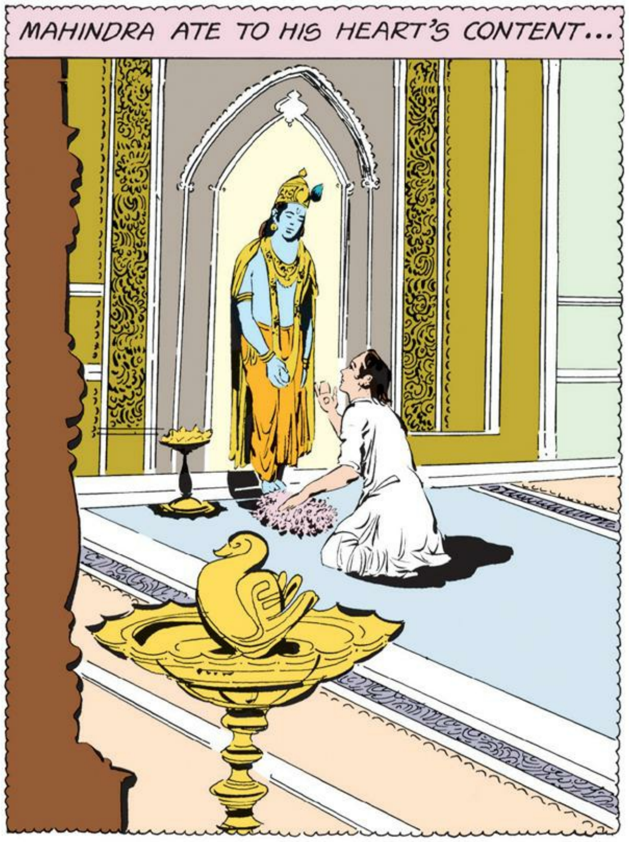

HA! HA!
HO! HI!
HA! HA!
HA! HA!

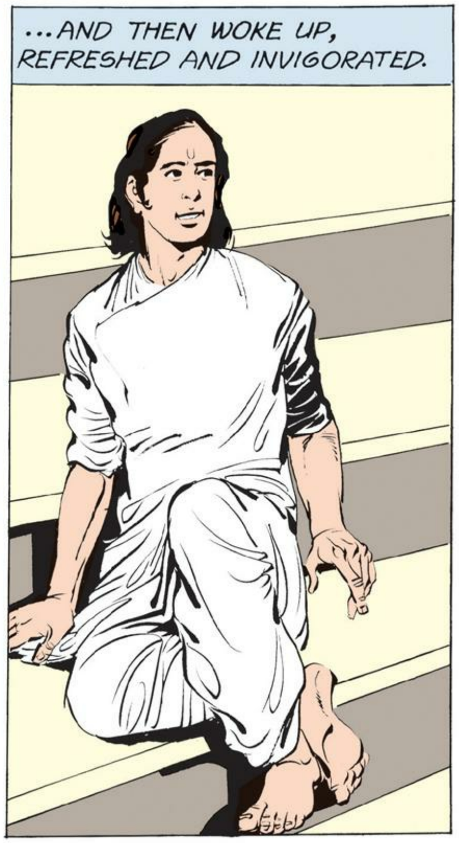

THIS IS TOO MUCH TO BEAR. BUT IF DIE I MUST, I SHALL DIE AT THE FEET OF THE LORD.

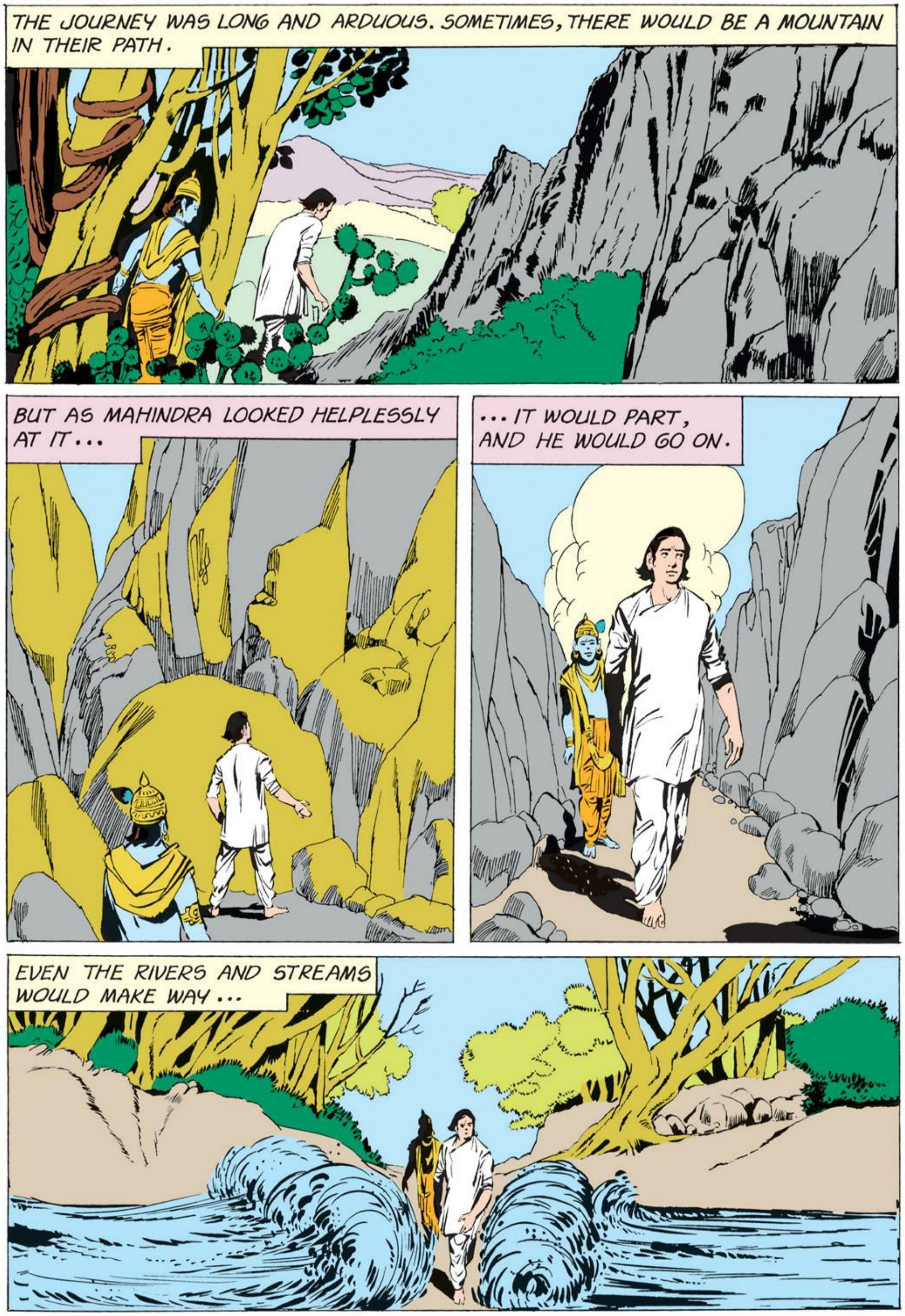

THAT VERY DAY, MAHINDRA LEFT THE VILLAGE FOR THE TEMPLE TOWN.
WHEN HE REACHED THE TEMPLE, EXHAUSTED, HE FELL ASLEEP ON THE STEPS.
THE LORD APPEARED.
LORD, PLEASE COME TO MY VILLAGE AS MY WITNESS. ONLY IF YOU AGREE, CAN VASANTI BE SAVED.
I WILL COME, MAHINDRA. YOU WALK AHEAD. I SHALL FOLLOW. BUT YOU MUST NEVER LOOK BACK.

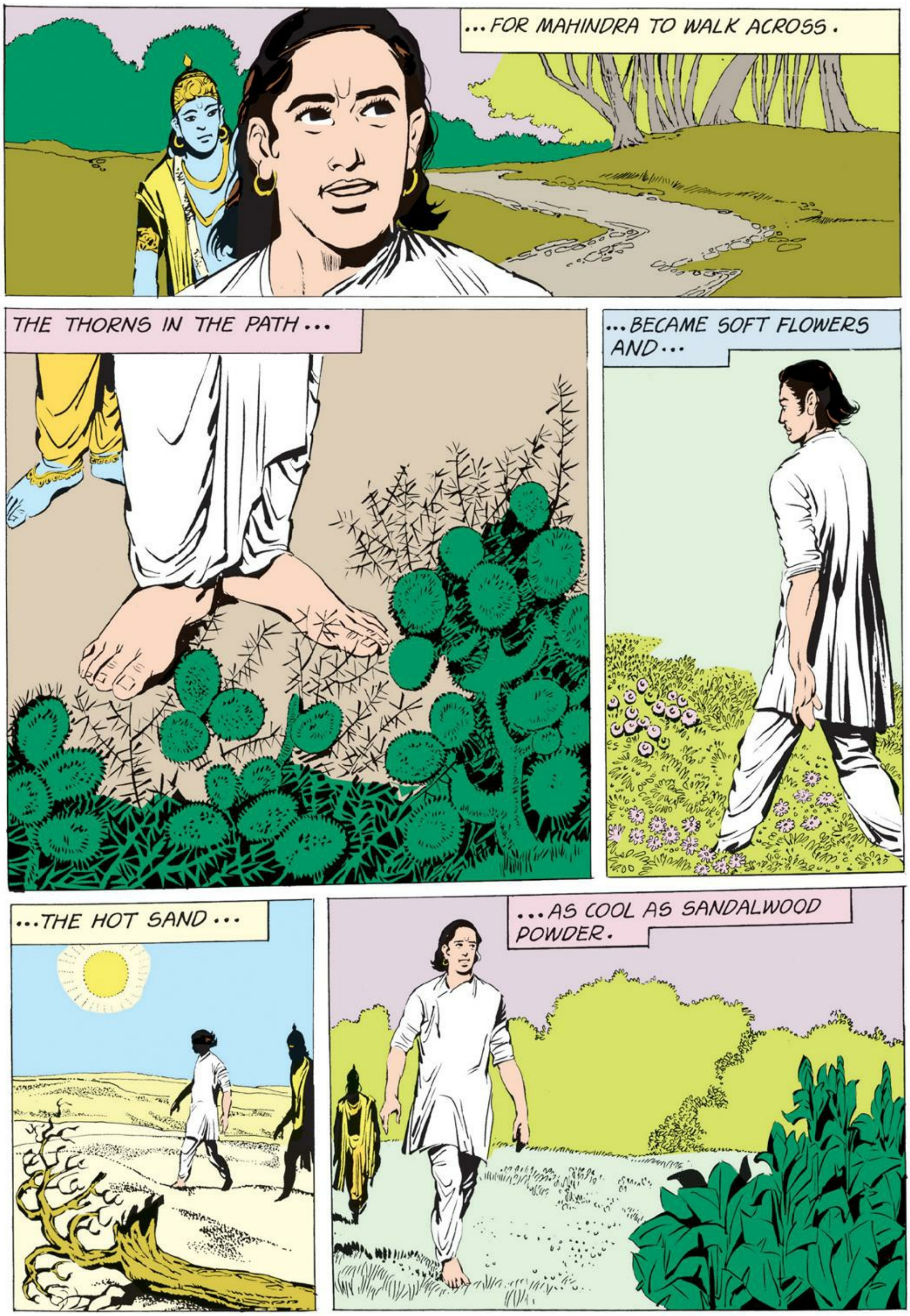

IF I DON'T, HOW WILL I KNOW THAT YOU ARE FOLLOWING ME?

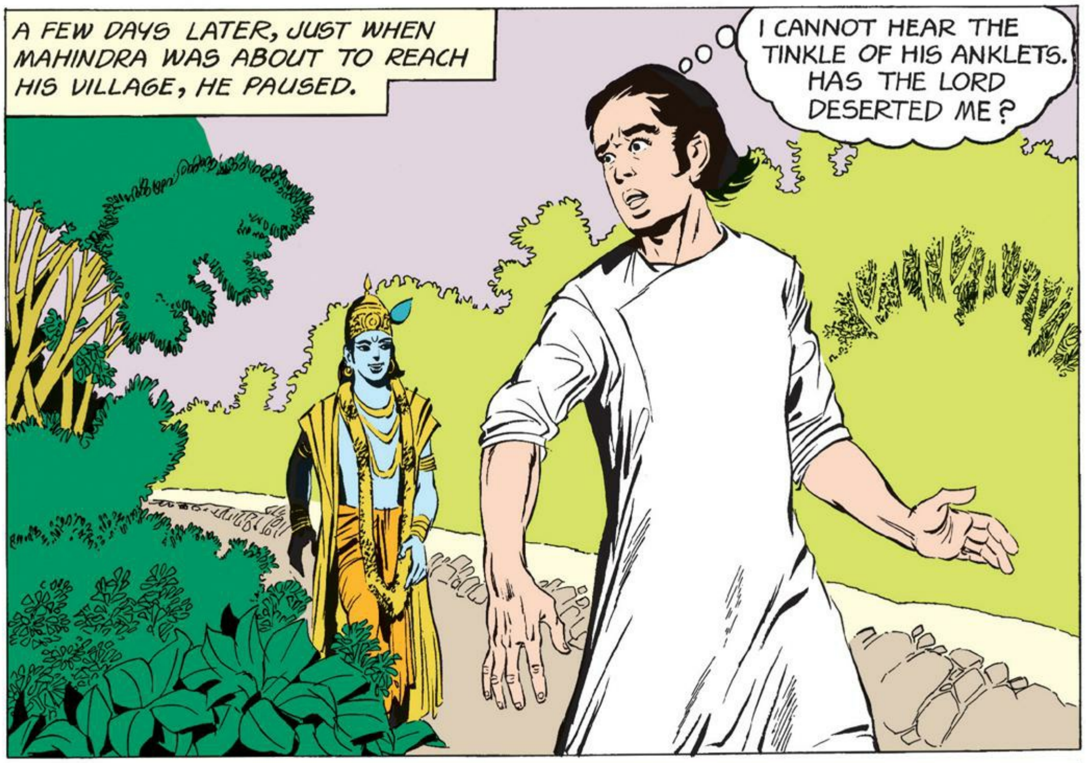

YOU WILL HEAR MY ANKLETS TINKLING. NOW, BEFORE WE START, EAT THIS.

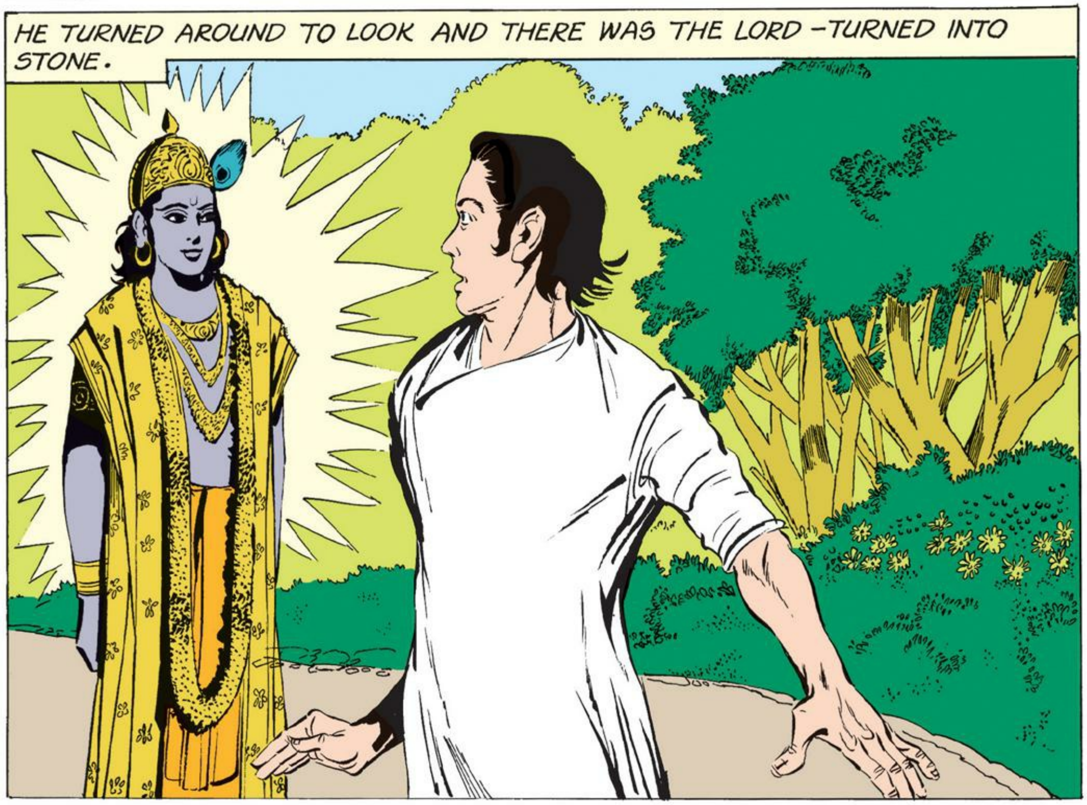

MAHINDRA ATE TO HIS HEART'S CONTENT...

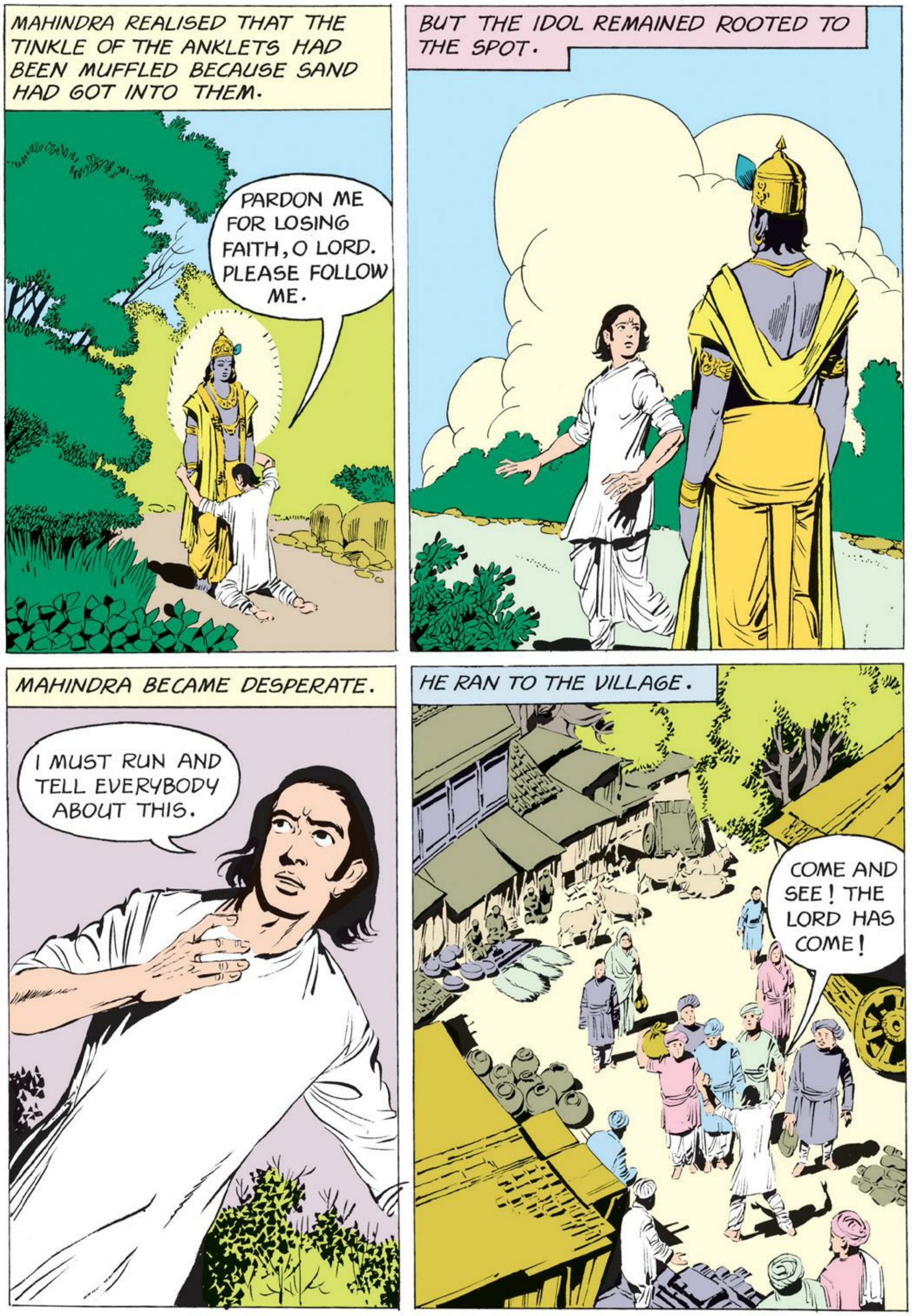

...AND THEN WOKE UP, REFRESHED AND INVIGORATED.

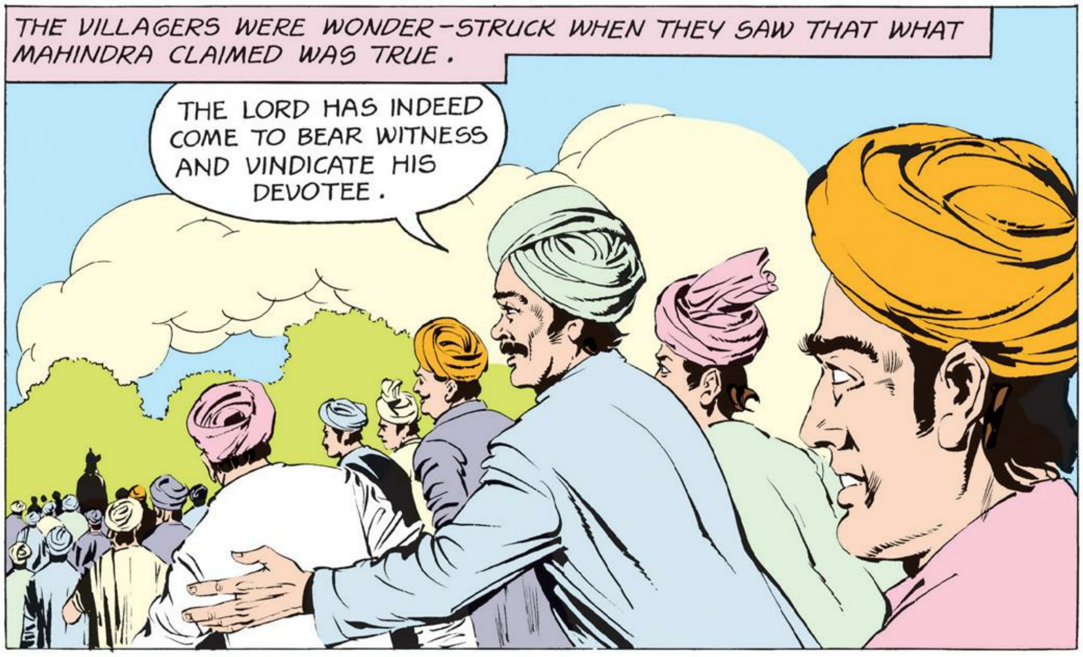

THE JOURNEY WAS LONG AND ARDUOUS. SOMETIMES, THERE WOULD BE A MOUNTAIN IN THEIR PATH.
BUT AS MAHINDRA LOOKED HELPLESSLY AT IT...
...IT WOULD PART, AND HE WOULD GO ON.
EVEN THE RIVERS AND STREAMS WOULD MAKE WAY...


...FOR MAHINDRA TO WALK ACROSS.
THE THORNS IN THE PATH...
...BECAME SOFT FLOWERS AND...
...THE HOT SAND...
...AS COOL AS SANDALWOOD POWDER.


A FEW DAYS LATER, JUST WHEN MAHINDRA WAS ABOUT TO REACH HIS VILLAGE, HE PAUSED.
I CANNOT HEAR THE TINKLE OF HIS ANKLETS. HAS THE LORD DESERTED ME?

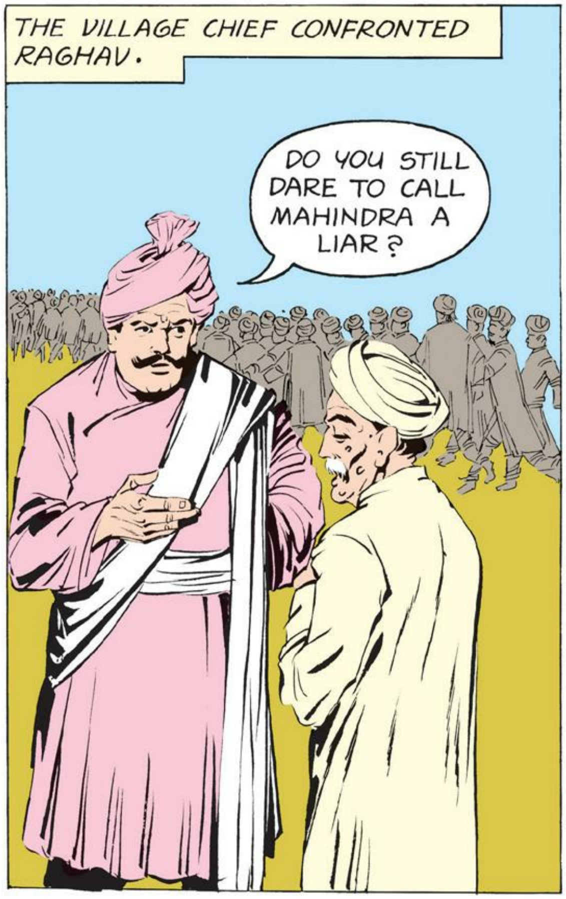

HE TURNED AROUND TO LOOK AND THERE WAS THE LORD -TURNED INTO STONE.


MAHINDRA REALISED THAT THE TINKLE OF THE ANKLETS HAD BEEN MUFFLED BECAUSE SAND HAD GOT INTO THEM.
PARDON ME FOR LOSING FAITH, O LORD. PLEASE FOLLOW ME.
BUT THE IDOL REMAINED ROOTED TO THE SPOT.
MAHINDRA BECAME DESPERATE.
I MUST RUN AND TELL EVERYBODY ABOUT THIS.
HE RAN TO THE VILLAGE.
COME AND SEE! THE LORD HAS COME!



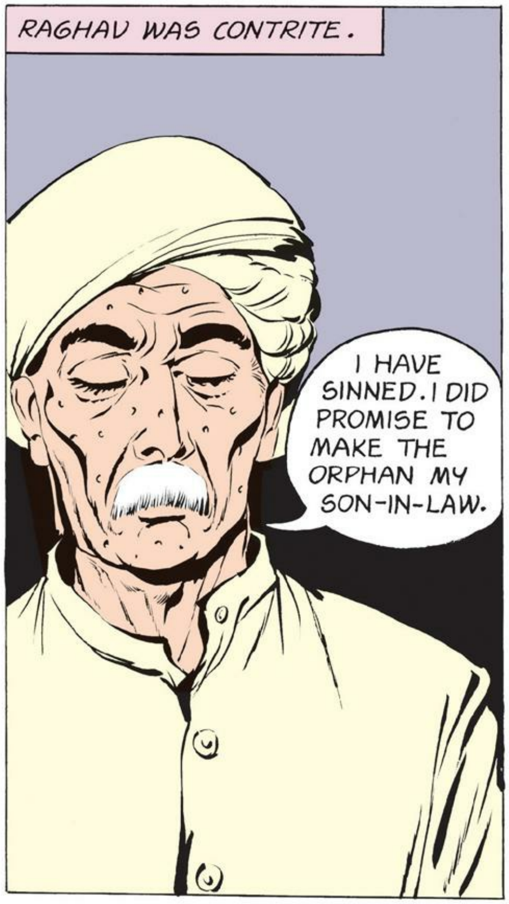
THE VILLAGERS WERE WONDER-STRUCK WHEN THEY SAW THAT WHAT MAHINDRA CLAIMED WAS TRUE.

THE LORD HAS INDEED COME TO BEAR WITNESS AND VINDICATE HIS DEVOTEE.



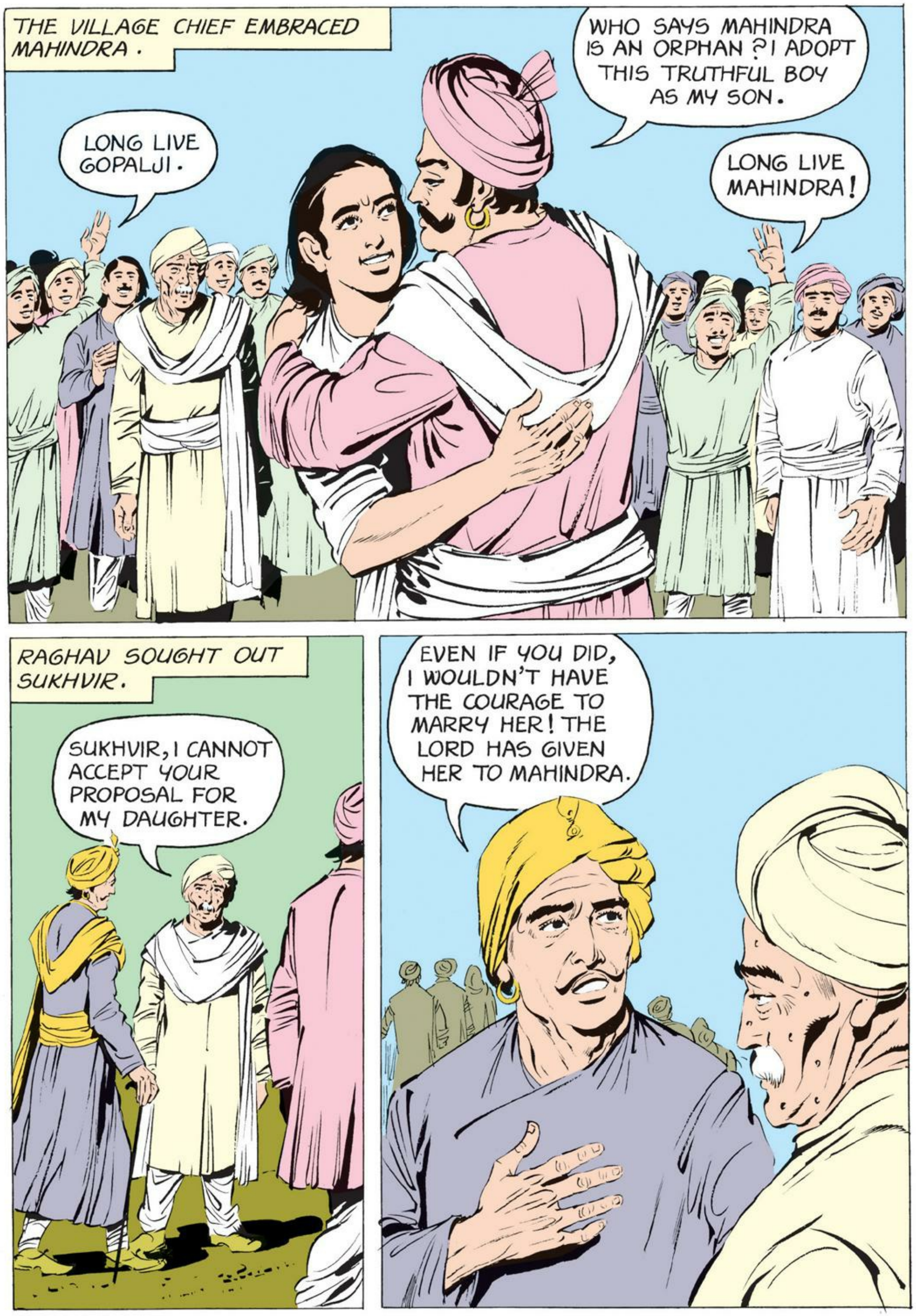
THE VILLAGE CHIEF CONFRONTED RAGHAV.

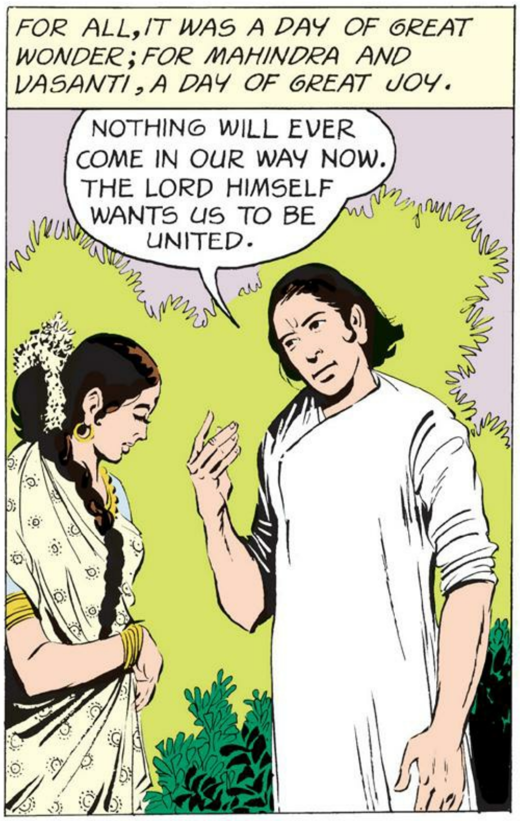
DO YOU STILL DARE TO CALL MAHINDRA A LIAR?

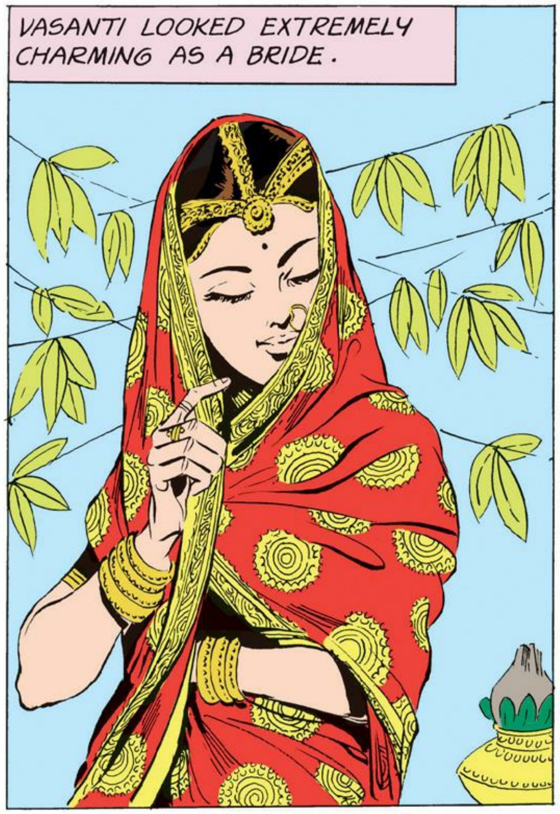


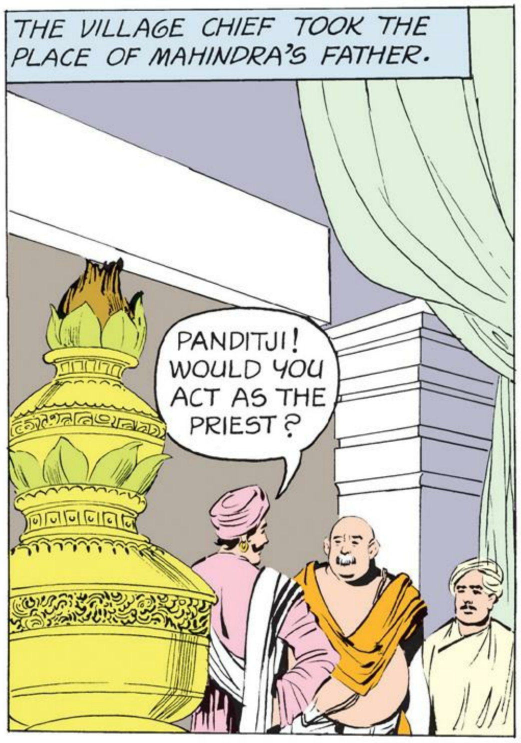
RAGHAV WAS CONTRITE.

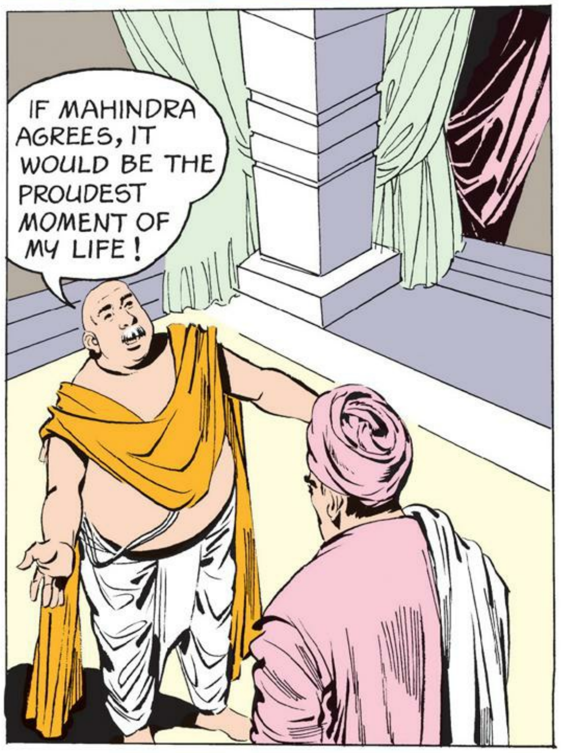
I HAVE SINNED. I DID PROMISE TO MAKE THE ORPHAN MY SON-IN-LAW.

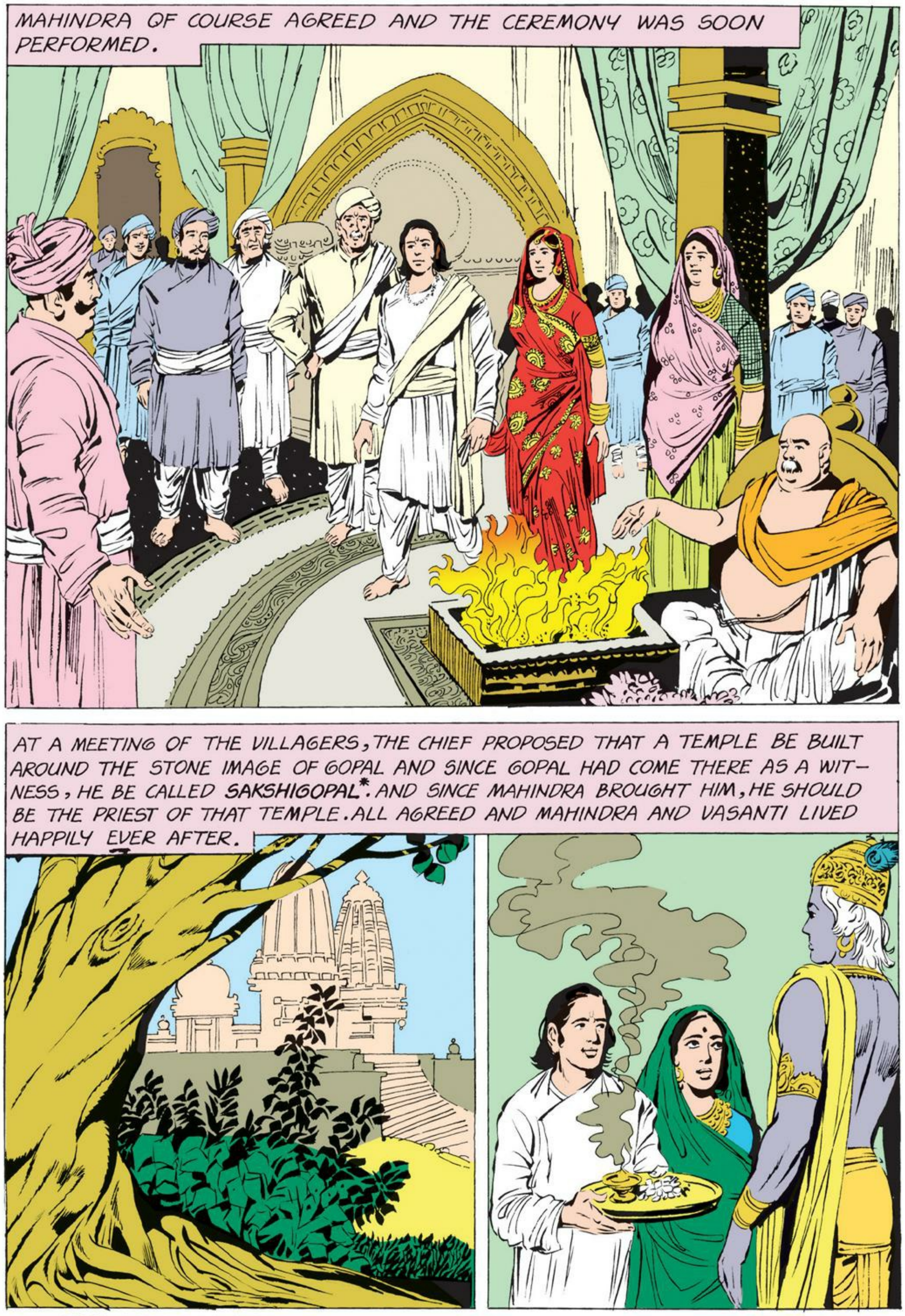

THE VILLAGE CHIEF EMBRACED MAHINDRA.
WHO SAYS MAHINDRA IS AN ORPHAN ? I ADOPT THIS TRUTHFUL BOY AS MY SON.
LONG LIVE GOPALJI.
LONG LIVE MAHINDRA!
RAGHAV SOUGHT OUT SUKHVIR.
SUKHVIR, I CANNOT ACCEPT YOUR PROPOSAL FOR MY DAUGHTER.
EVEN IF YOU DID, I WOULDN'T HAVE THE COURAGE TO MARRY HER! THE LORD HAS GIVEN HER TO MAHINDRA.


FOR ALL, IT WAS A DAY OF GREAT WONDER; FOR MAHINDRA AND VASANTI, A DAY OF GREAT JOY.
NOTHING WILL EVER COME IN OUR WAY NOW. THE LORD HIMSELF WANTS US TO BE UNITED.


VASANTI LOOKED EXTREMELY CHARMING AS A BRIDE.


THE VILLAGE CHIEF TOOK THE PLACE OF MAHINDRA'S FATHER.
PANDITJI! WOULD YOU ACT AS THE PRIEST?


IF MAHINDRA AGREES, IT WOULD BE THE PROUDEST MOMENT OF MY LIFE!


MAHINDRA OF COURSE AGREED AND THE CEREMONY WAS SOON PERFORMED.
AT A MEETING OF THE VILLAGERS, THE CHIEF PROPOSED THAT A TEMPLE BE BUILT AROUND THE STONE IMAGE OF GOPAL AND SINCE GOPAL HAD COME THERE AS A WITNESS, HE BE CALLED **SAKSHIGOPAL***. AND SINCE MAHINDRA BROUGHT HIM, HE SHOULD BE THE PRIEST OF THAT TEMPLE. ALL AGREED AND MAHINDRA AND VASANTI LIVED HAPPILY EVER AFTER.

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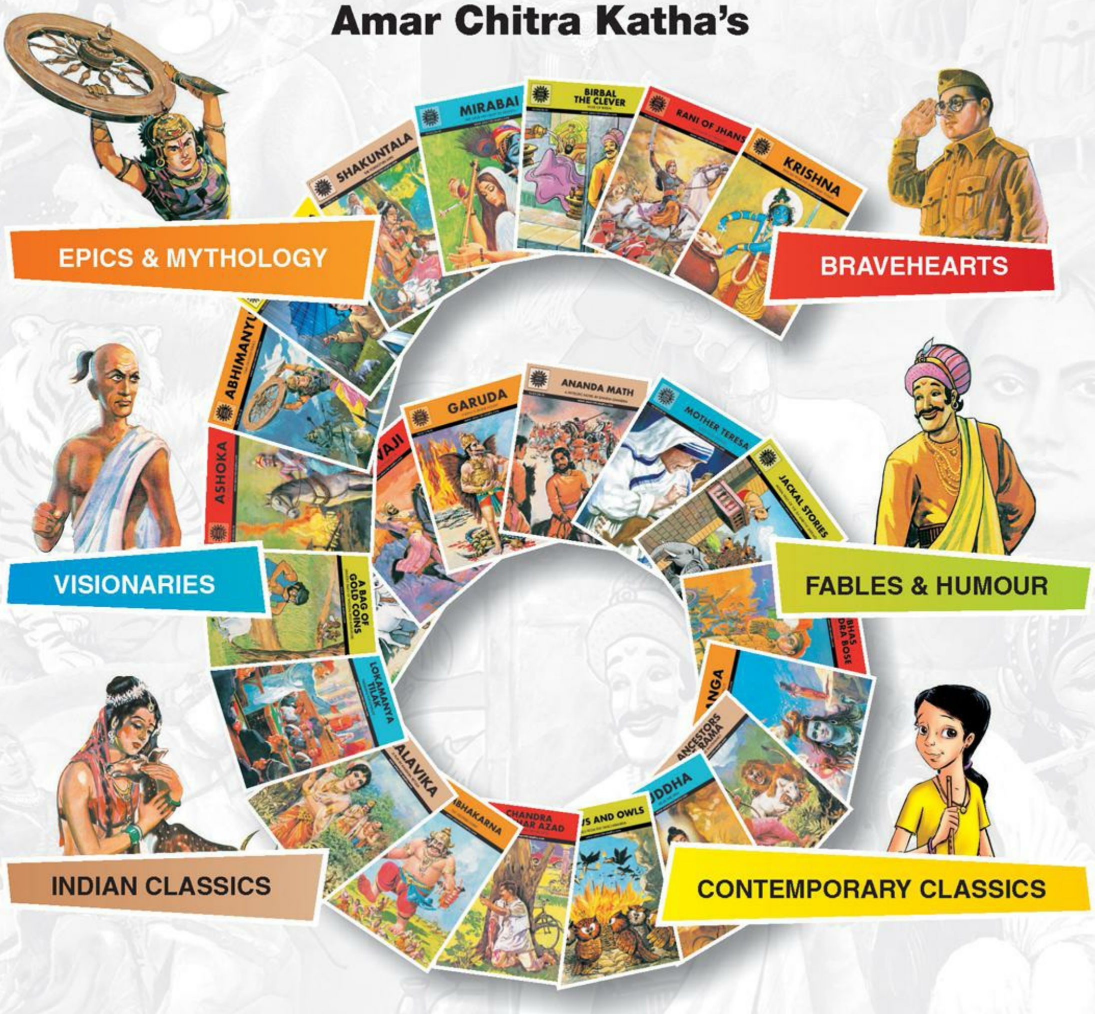
* GOPAL THE WITNESS.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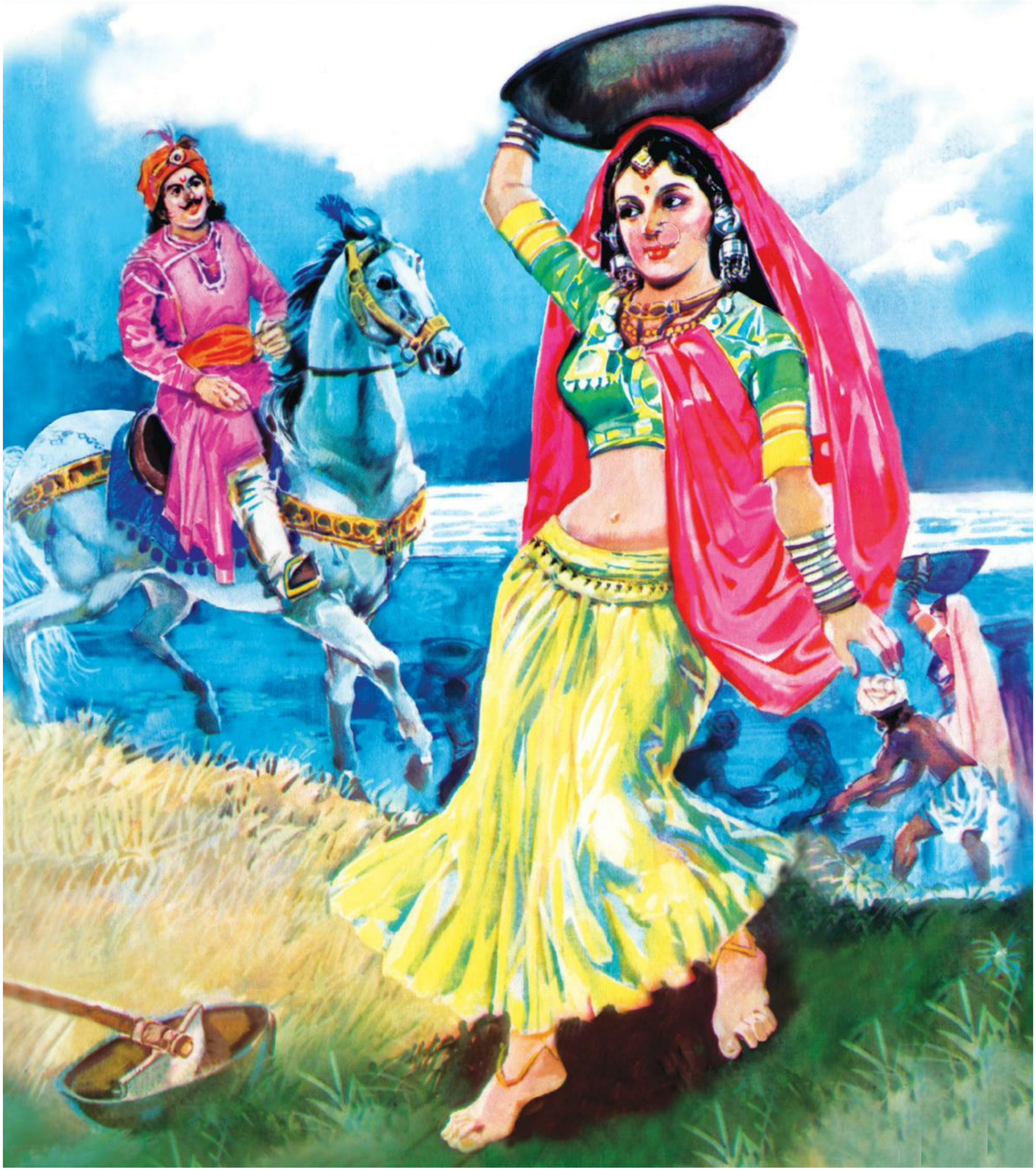
AMAR CHITRA KATHA

JASMA OF THE ODES

SHE SPURNED A KING



AMAR
CHITRA
KATHA

The route to your roots

JASMA OF THE ODES

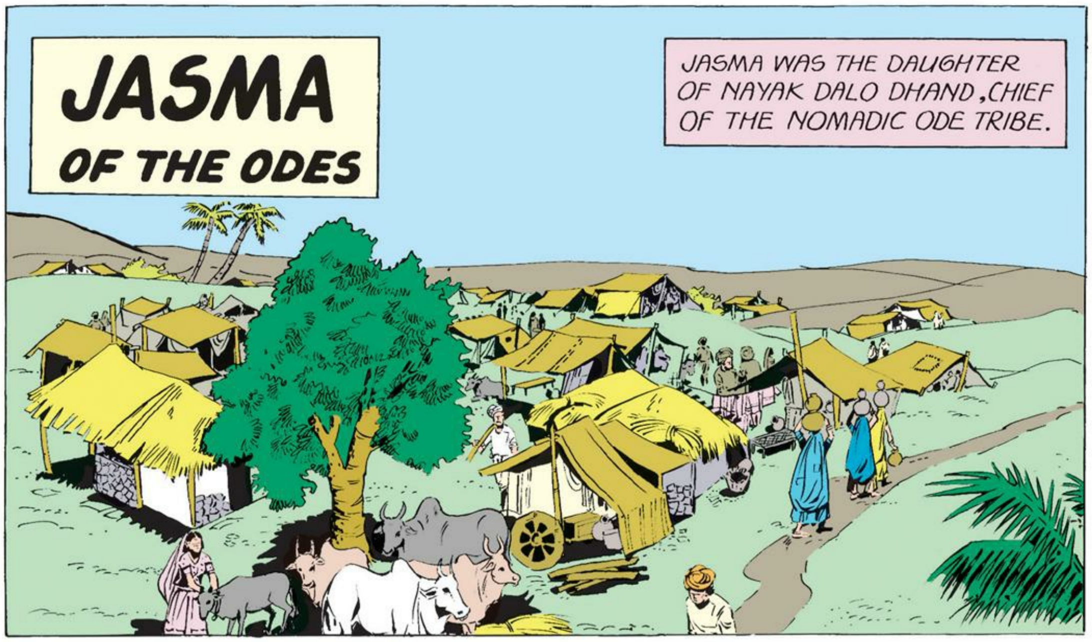
Jealous of her beauty, Jasma's step-mother decides to marry her to a cripple named Rupa. To the step-mother's disappointment, Jasma is happy with the gentle Rupa.

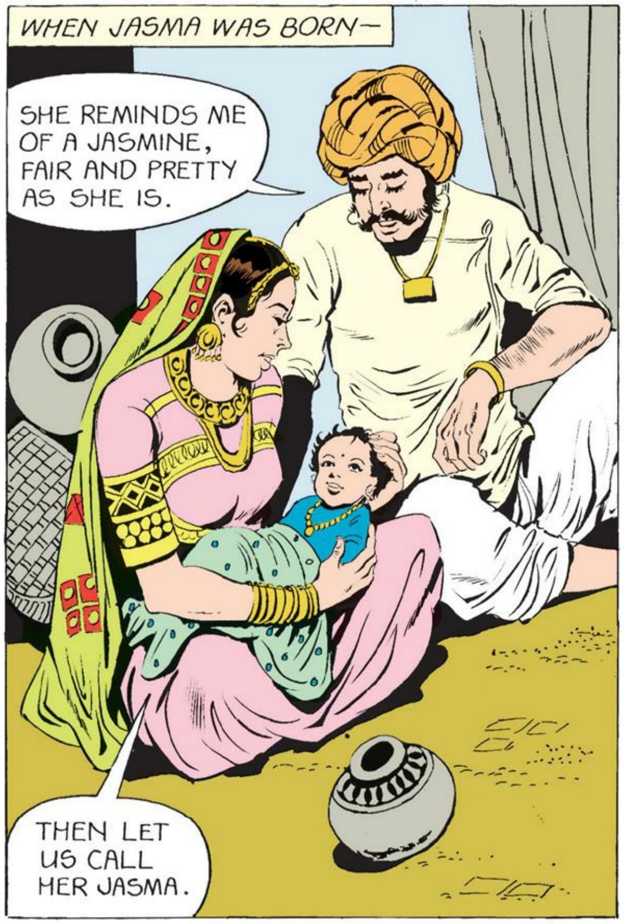
The king of Gujarat wants to marry Jasma. She refuses. Furious, he orders his men to kill Rupa. The nomadic Odes, Jasma's tribe, attack the King's army, and most of them are killed. Rather than let the unjust King capture her, Jasma decides to immolate herself,

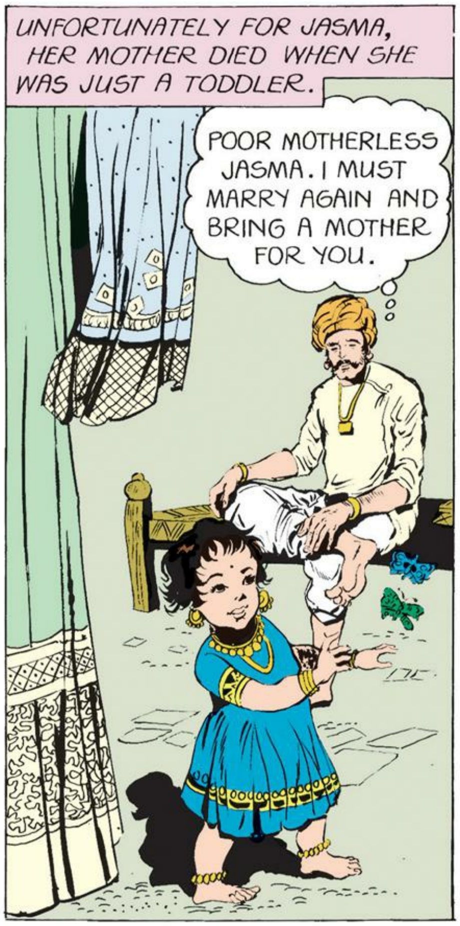
Jasma's story is popular in Gujarat, and there is a Jasma Devi temple near Baroda.

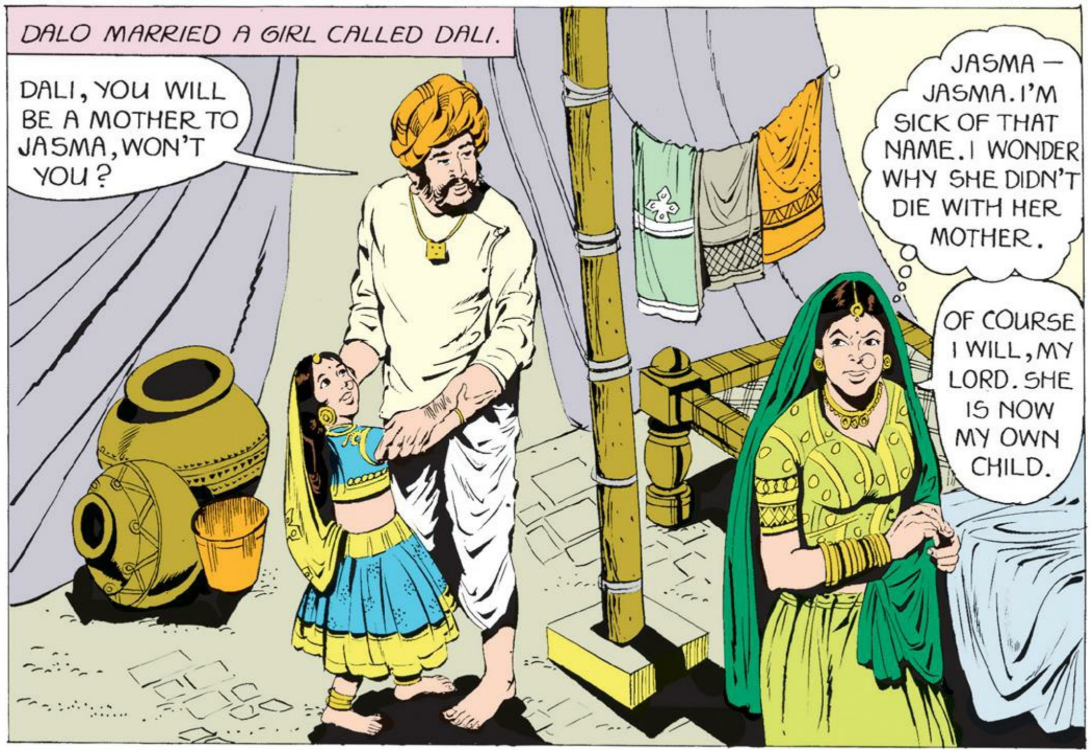
Script	**Illustrations**	**Editor**
Dr. Sushila Mehta	H. S. Chavan	Anant Pai

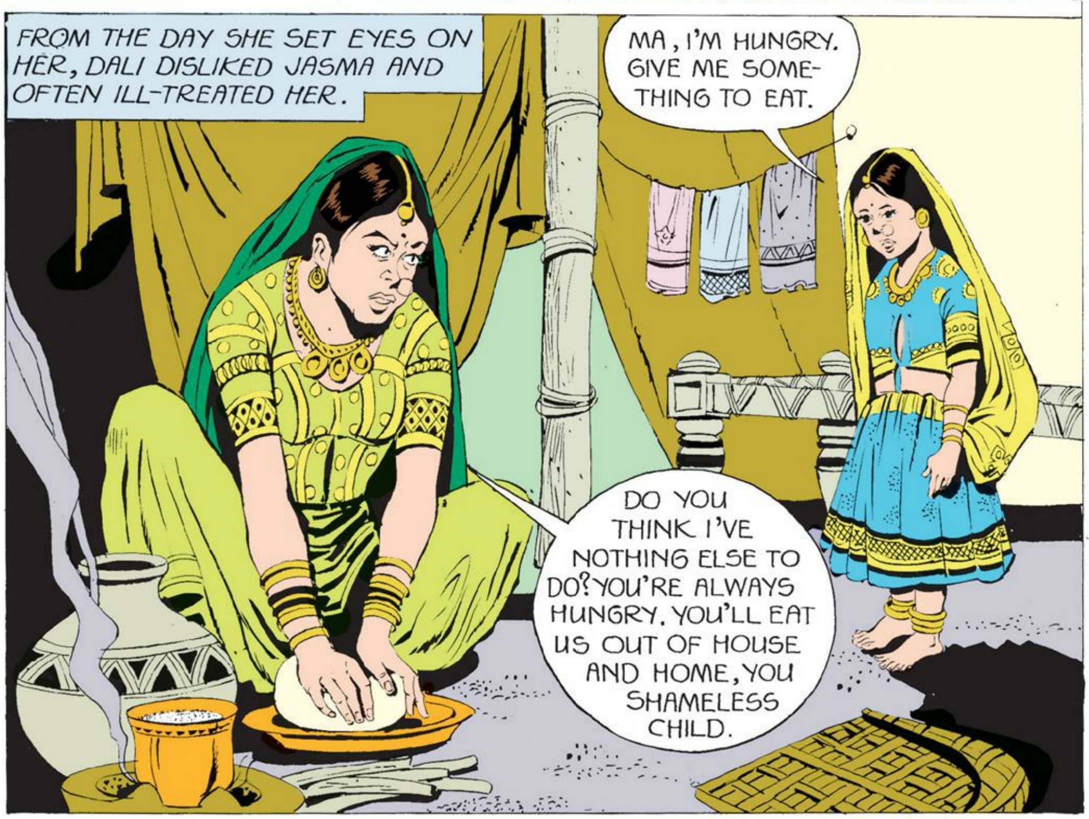
JASMA OF THE ODES

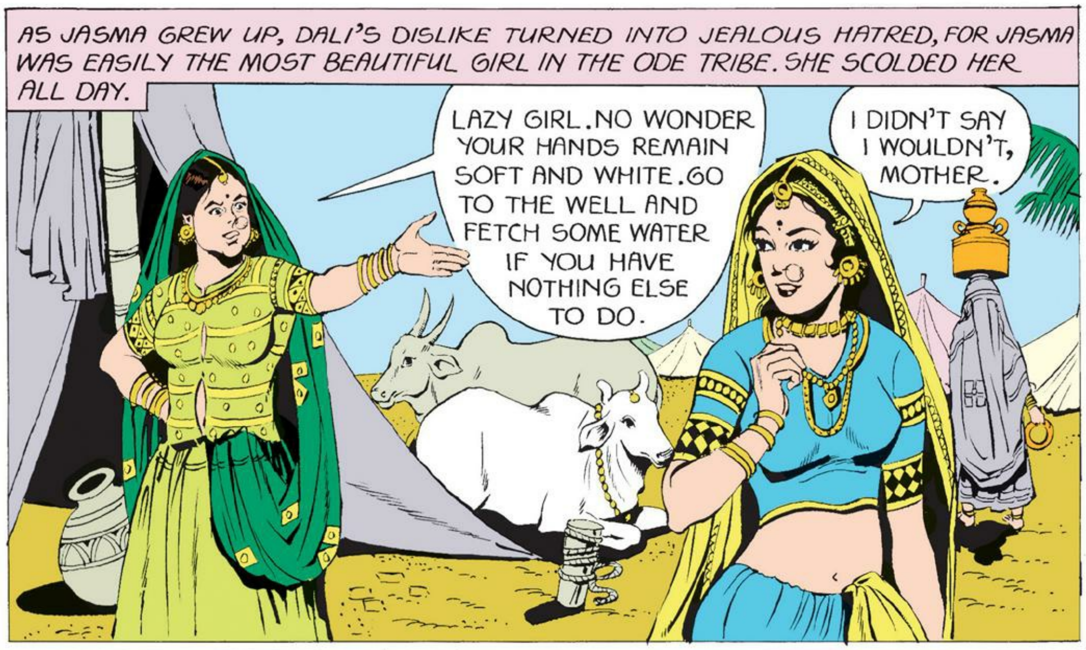

JASMA WAS THE DAUGHTER OF NAYAK DALO DHAND, CHIEF OF THE NOMADIC ODE TRIBE.


WHEN JASMA WAS BORN—
SHE REMINDS ME OF A JASMINE, FAIR AND PRETTY AS SHE IS.
THEN LET US CALL HER JASMA.

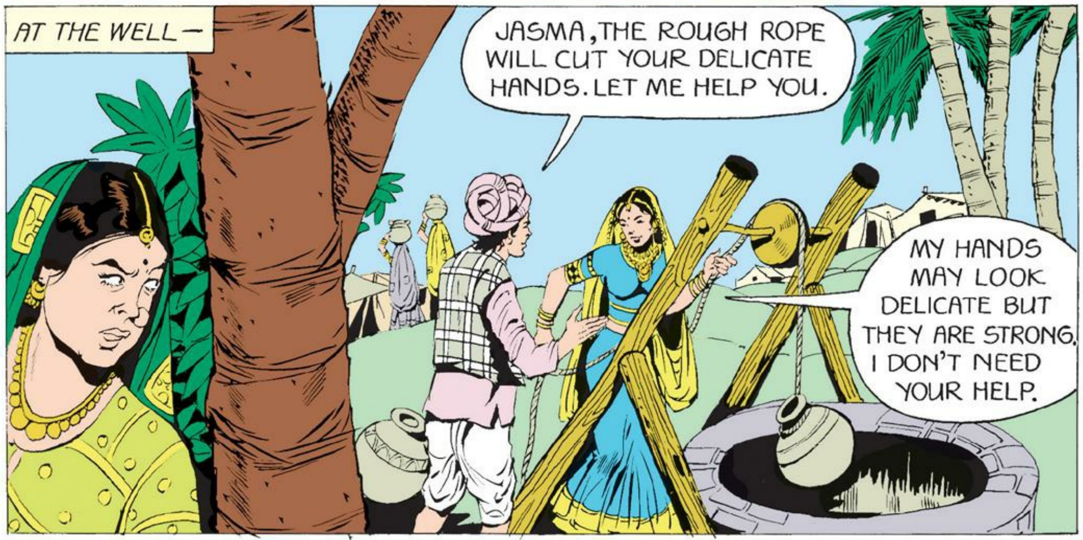

UNFORTUNATELY FOR JASMA, HER MOTHER DIED WHEN SHE WAS JUST A TODDLER.
POOR MOTHERLESS JASMA. I MUST MARRY AGAIN AND BRING A MOTHER FOR YOU.


DALO MARRIED A GIRL CALLED DALI.
DALI, YOU WILL BE A MOTHER TO JASMA, WON'T YOU ?
JASMA — JASMA. I'M SICK OF THAT NAME. I WONDER WHY SHE DIDN'T DIE WITH HER MOTHER.
OF COURSE I WILL, MY LORD. SHE IS NOW MY OWN CHILD.

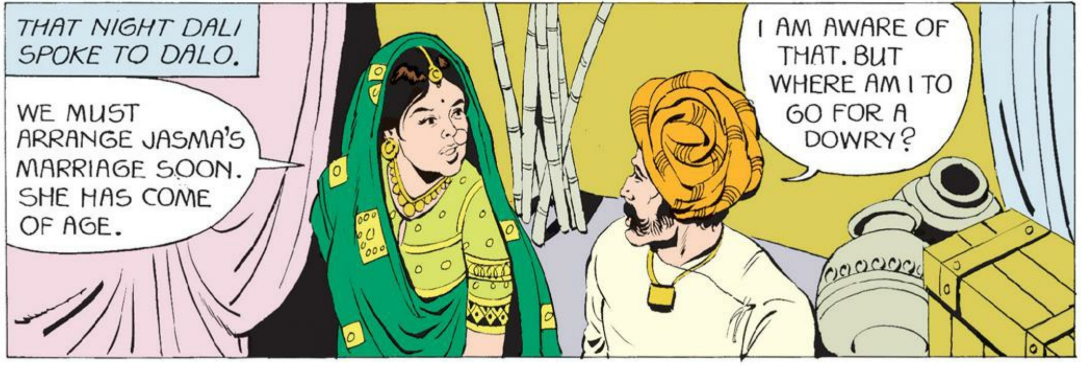

FROM THE DAY SHE SET EYES ON HER, DALI DISLIKED JASMA AND OFTEN ILL-TREATED HER.
MA, I'M HUNGRY. GIVE ME SOMETHING TO EAT.
DO YOU THINK I'VE NOTHING ELSE TO DO? YOU'RE ALWAYS HUNGRY. YOU'LL EAT US OUT OF HOUSE AND HOME, YOU SHAMELESS CHILD.


AS JASMA GREW UP, DALI'S DISLIKE TURNED INTO JEALOUS HATRED, FOR JASMA WAS EASILY THE MOST BEAUTIFUL GIRL IN THE ODE TRIBE. SHE SCOLDED HER ALL DAY.

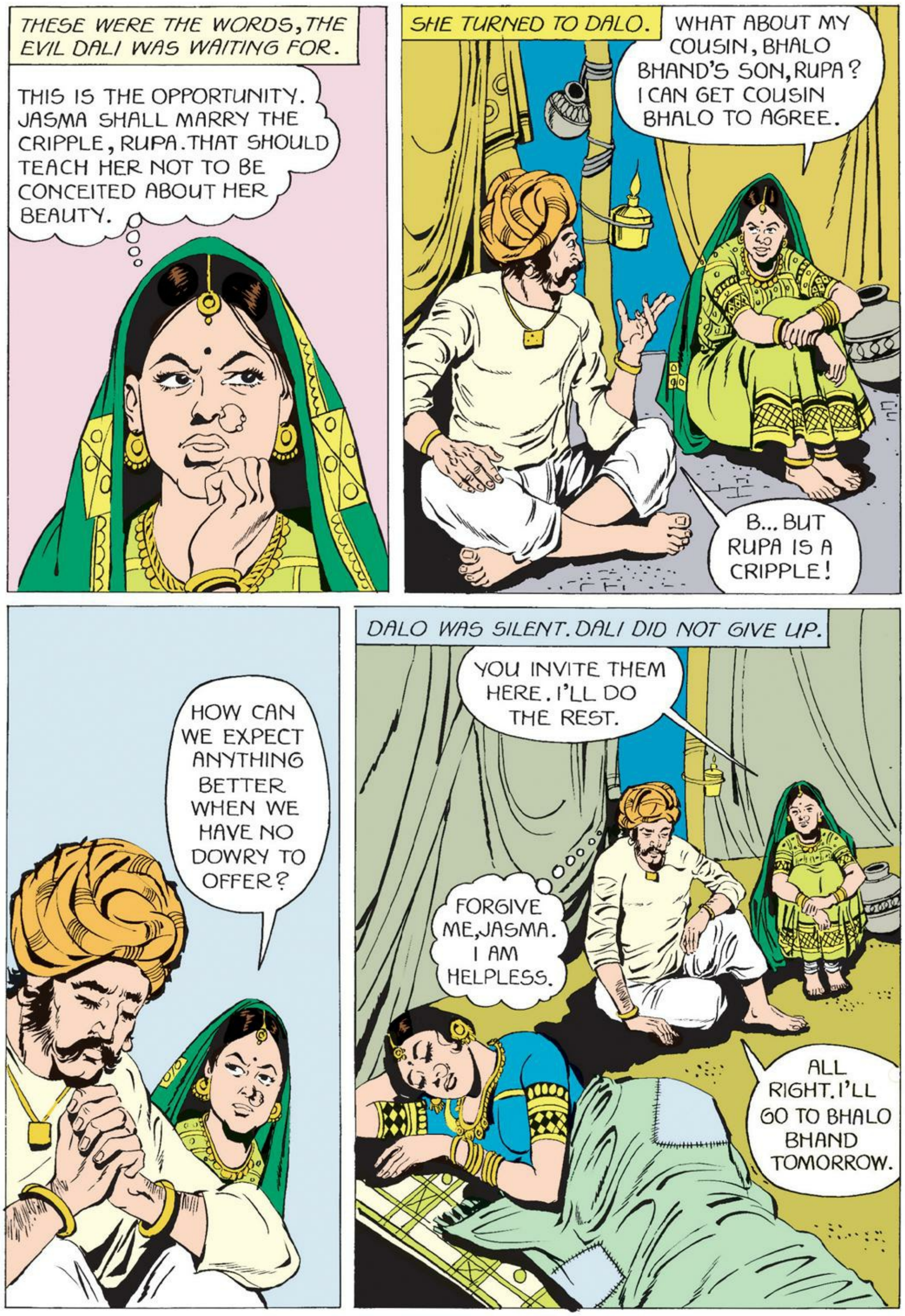
LAZY GIRL. NO WONDER YOUR HANDS REMAIN SOFT AND WHITE. GO TO THE WELL AND FETCH SOME WATER IF YOU HAVE NOTHING ELSE TO DO.
I DIDN'T SAY I WOULDN'T, MOTHER.

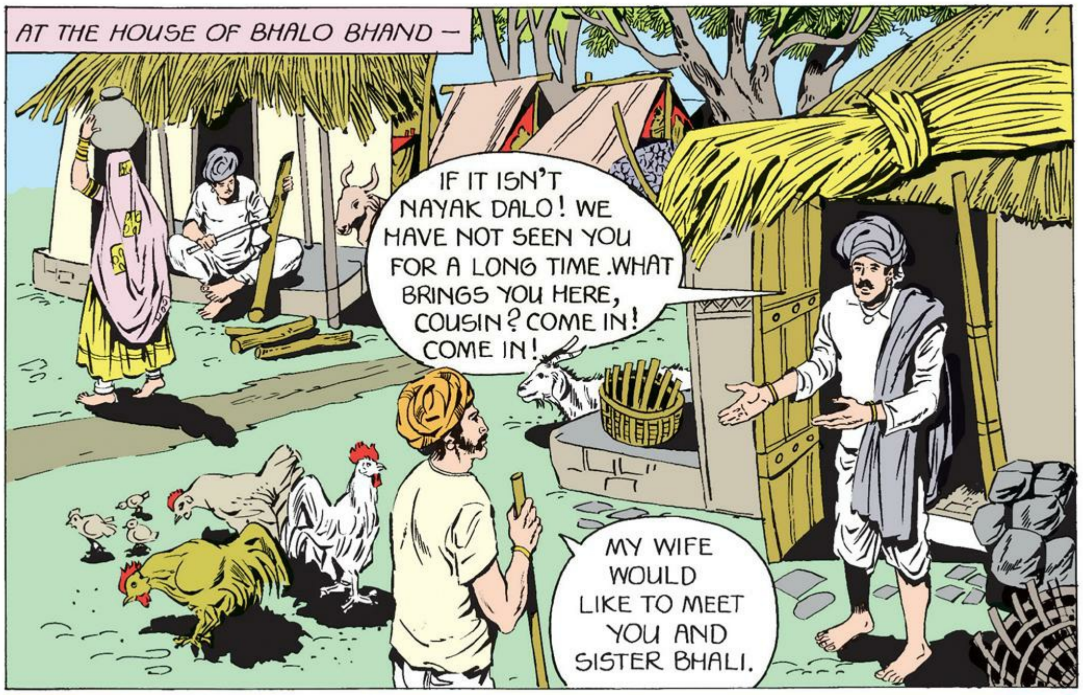

AT THE WELL—

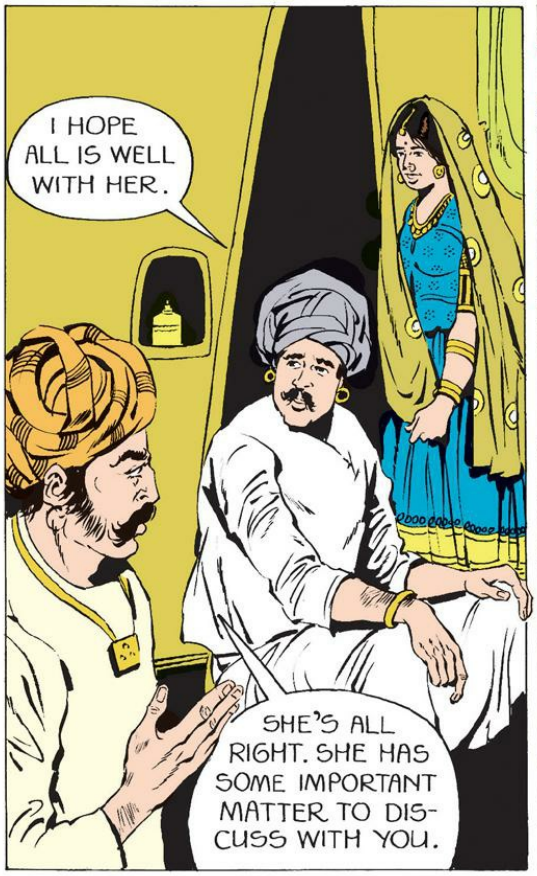
JASMA, THE ROUGH ROPE WILL CUT YOUR DELICATE HANDS. LET ME HELP YOU.
MY HANDS MAY LOOK DELICATE BUT THEY ARE STRONG. I DON'T NEED YOUR HELP.

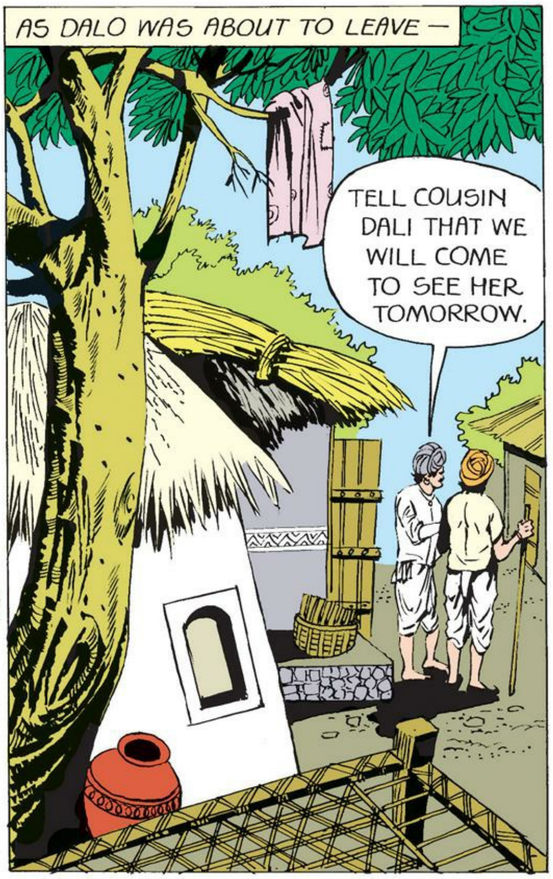

THAT NIGHT DALI SPOKE TO DALO.

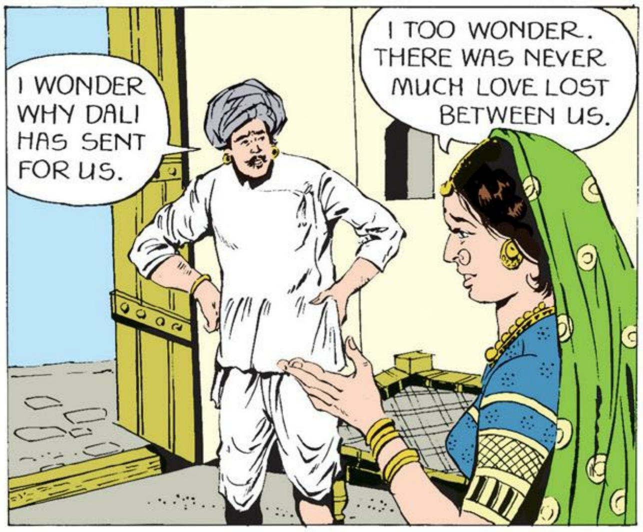
WE MUST ARRANGE JASMA'S MARRIAGE SOON. SHE HAS COME OF AGE.
I AM AWARE OF THAT. BUT WHERE AM I TO GO FOR A DOWRY?

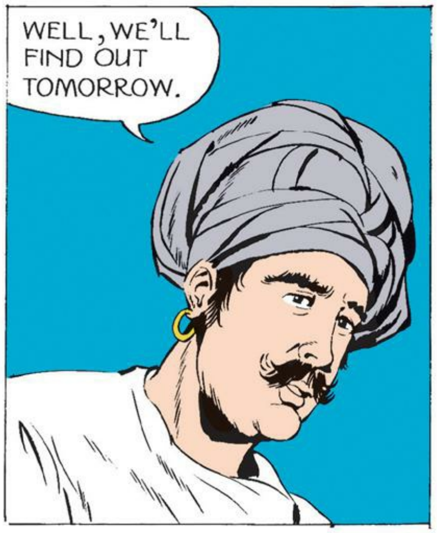

THESE WERE THE WORDS, THE EVIL DALI WAS WAITING FOR.
THIS IS THE OPPORTUNITY. JASMA SHALL MARRY THE CRIPPLE, RUPA. THAT SHOULD TEACH HER NOT TO BE CONCEITED ABOUT HER BEAUTY.
SHE TURNED TO DALO.
WHAT ABOUT MY COUSIN, BHALO BHAND'S SON, RUPA? I CAN GET COUSIN BHALO TO AGREE.
B... BUT RUPA IS A CRIPPLE!
HOW CAN WE EXPECT ANYTHING BETTER WHEN WE HAVE NO DOWRY TO OFFER?
DALO WAS SILENT. DALI DID NOT GIVE UP.
YOU INVITE THEM HERE. I'LL DO THE REST.
FORGIVE ME, JASMA. I AM HELPLESS.
ALL RIGHT. I'LL GO TO BHALO BHAND TOMORROW.

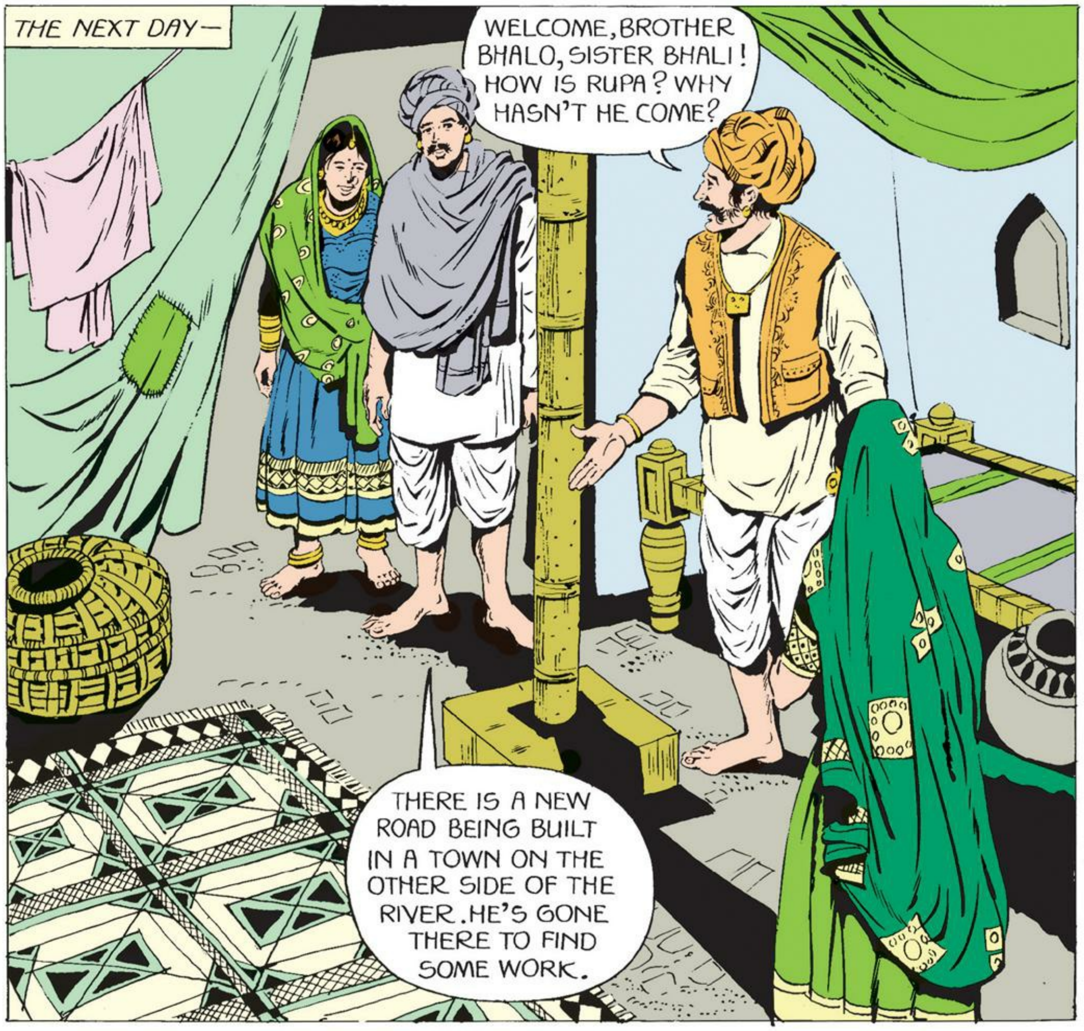

AT THE HOUSE OF BHALO BHAND —
IF IT ISN'T NAYAK DALO! WE HAVE NOT SEEN YOU FOR A LONG TIME. WHAT BRINGS YOU HERE, COUSIN? COME IN! COME IN!
MY WIFE WOULD LIKE TO MEET YOU AND SISTER BHALI.

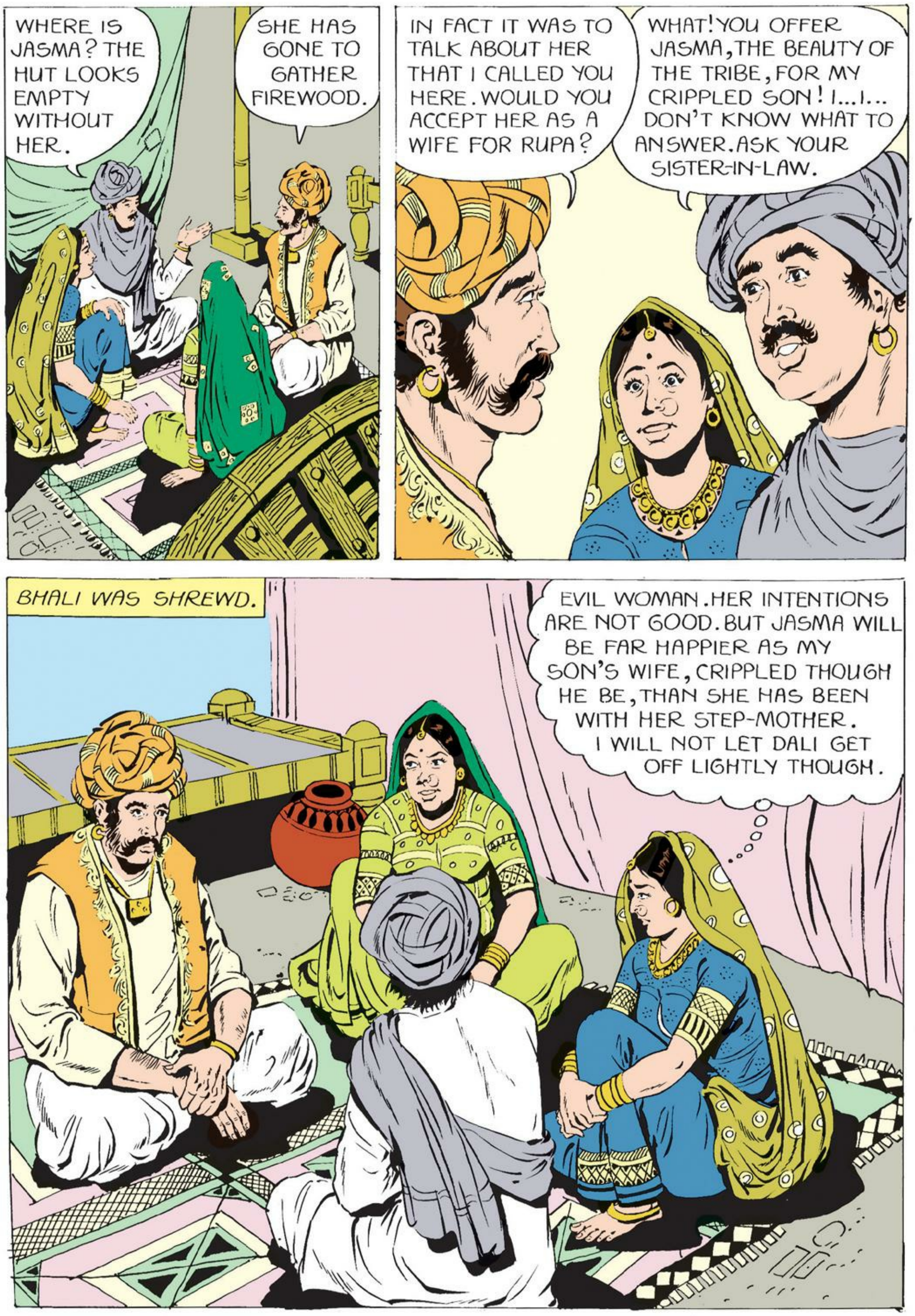

I HOPE ALL IS WELL WITH HER.
SHE'S ALL RIGHT. SHE HAS SOME IMPORTANT MATTER TO DISCUSS WITH YOU.

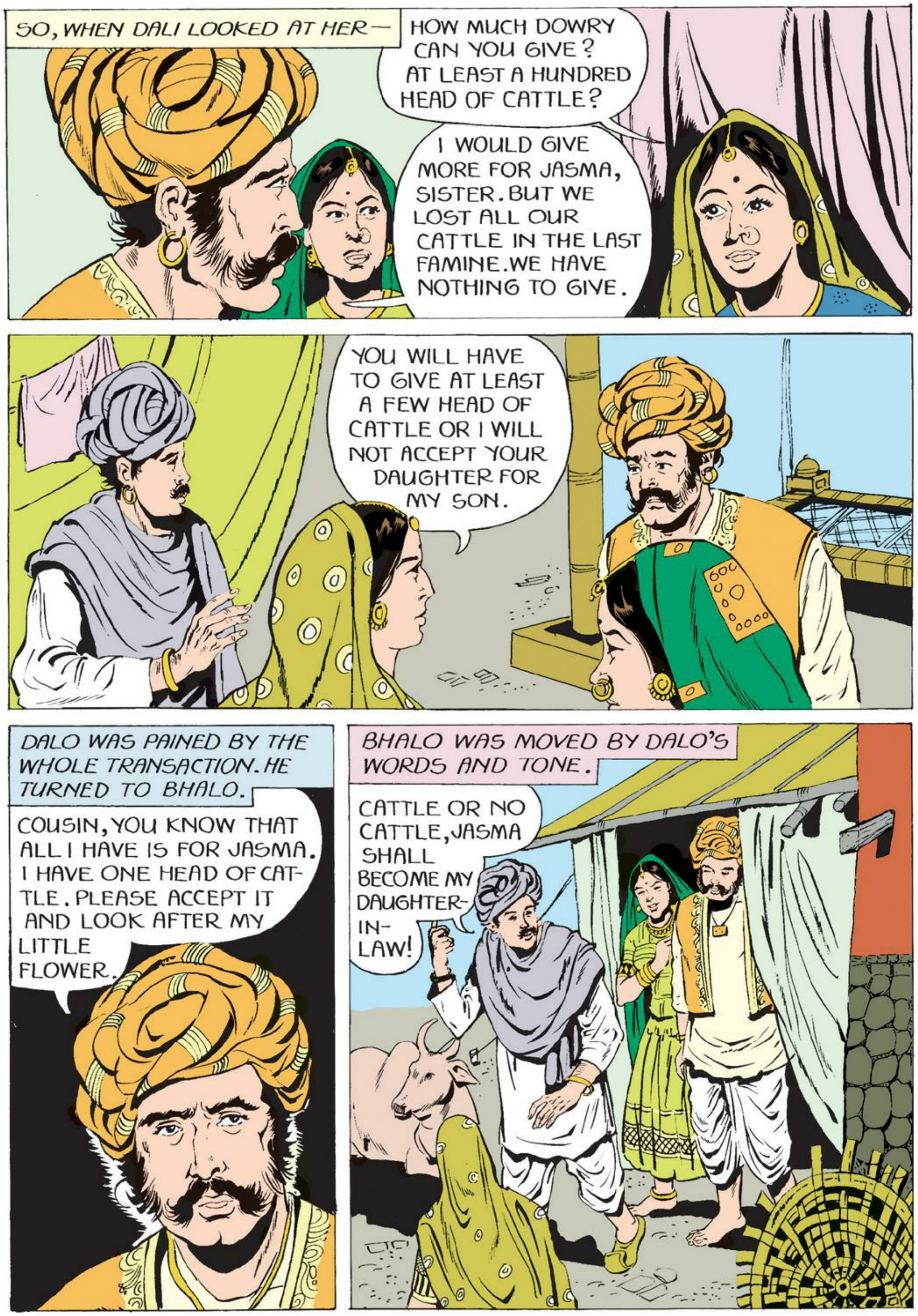

AS DALO WAS ABOUT TO LEAVE —
TELL COUSIN DALI THAT WE WILL COME TO SEE HER TOMORROW.

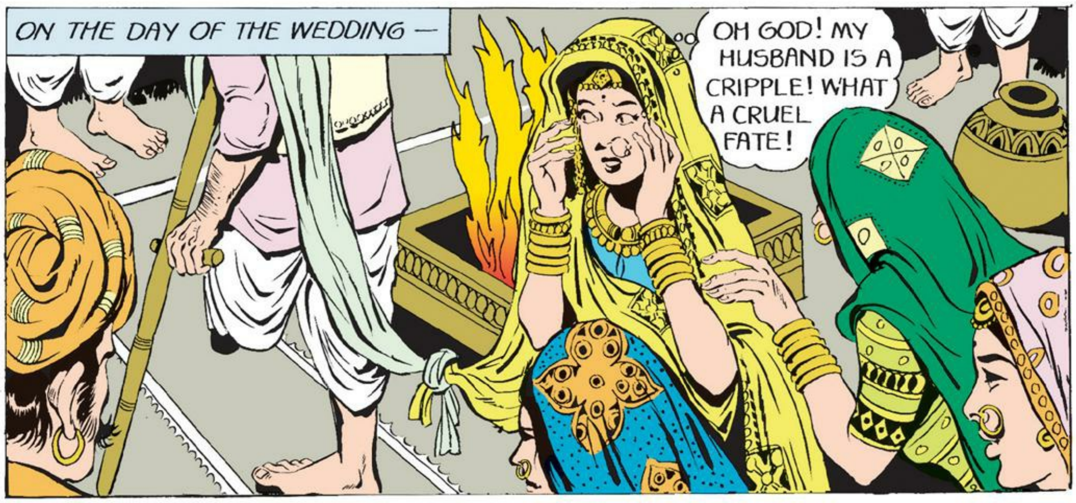

I WONDER WHY DALI HAS SENT FOR US.
I TOO WONDER. THERE WAS NEVER MUCH LOVE LOST BETWEEN US.

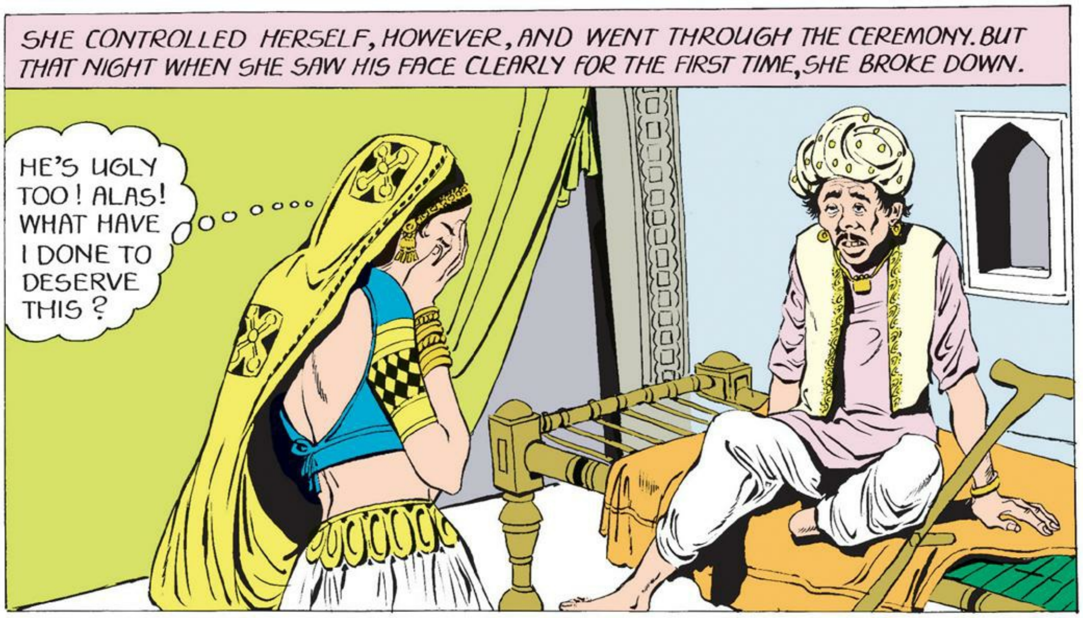

WELL, WE'LL FIND OUT TOMORROW.

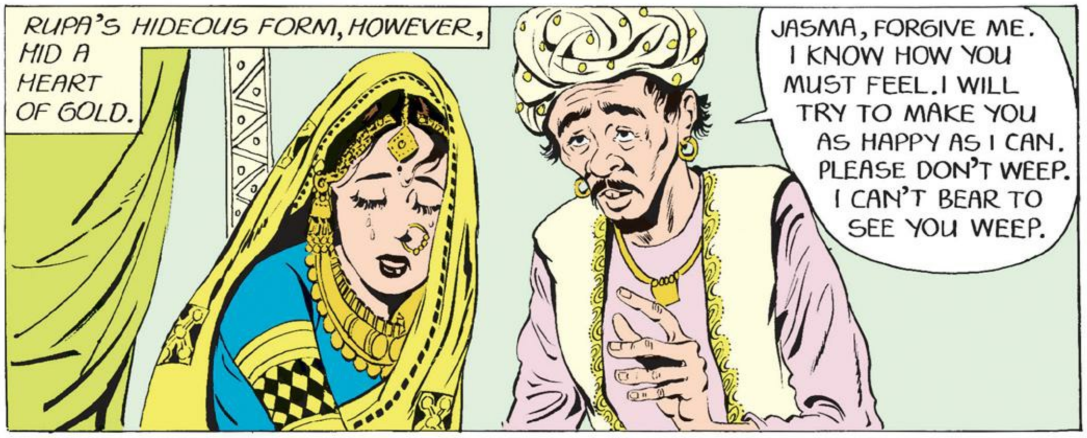

THE NEXT DAY—
WELCOME, BROTHER BHALO, SISTER BHALI! HOW IS RUPA? WHY HASN'T HE COME?
THERE IS A NEW ROAD BEING BUILT IN A TOWN ON THE OTHER SIDE OF THE RIVER. HE'S GONE THERE TO FIND SOME WORK.

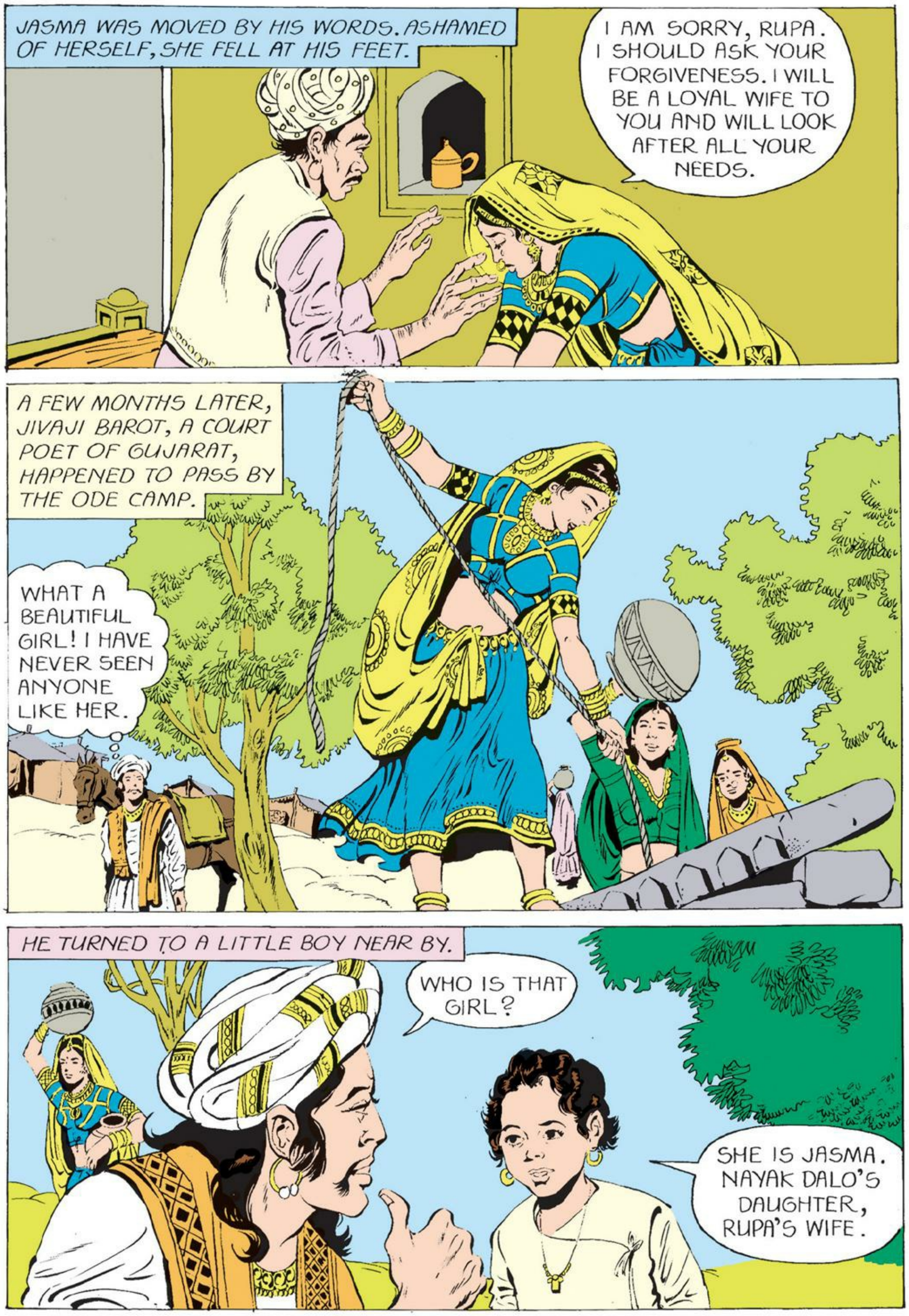

WHERE IS JASMA? THE HUT LOOKS EMPTY WITHOUT HER.
SHE HAS GONE TO GATHER FIREWOOD.
IN FACT IT WAS TO TALK ABOUT HER THAT I CALLED YOU HERE. WOULD YOU ACCEPT HER AS A WIFE FOR RUPA?
WHAT! YOU OFFER JASMA, THE BEAUTY OF THE TRIBE, FOR MY CRIPPLED SON! I...I... DON'T KNOW WHAT TO ANSWER. ASK YOUR SISTER-IN-LAW.
BHALI WAS SHREWD.
EVIL WOMAN. HER INTENTIONS ARE NOT GOOD. BUT JASMA WILL BE FAR HAPPIER AS MY SON'S WIFE, CRIPPLED THOUGH HE BE, THAN SHE HAS BEEN WITH HER STEP-MOTHER. I WILL NOT LET DALI GET OFF LIGHTLY THOUGH.

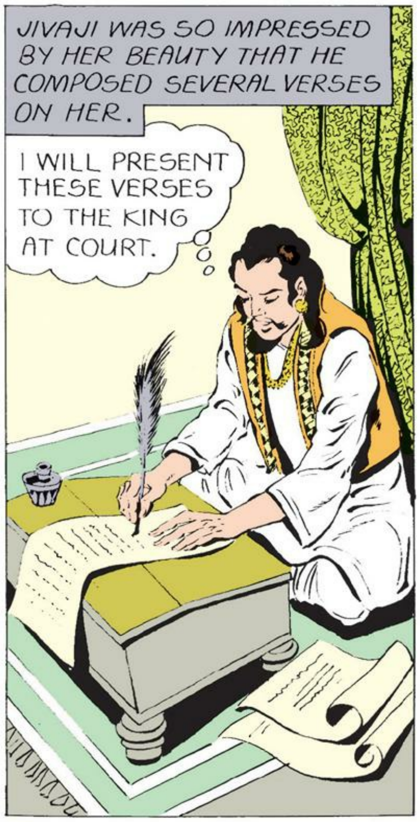

SO, WHEN DALI LOOKED AT HER—
HOW MUCH DOWRY CAN YOU GIVE? AT LEAST A HUNDRED HEAD OF CATTLE?
I WOULD GIVE MORE FOR JASMA, SISTER. BUT WE LOST ALL OUR CATTLE IN THE LAST FAMINE. WE HAVE NOTHING TO GIVE.
YOU WILL HAVE TO GIVE AT LEAST A FEW HEAD OF CATTLE OR I WILL NOT ACCEPT YOUR DAUGHTER FOR MY SON.
DALO WAS PAINED BY THE WHOLE TRANSACTION. HE TURNED TO BHALO.
COUSIN, YOU KNOW THAT ALL I HAVE IS FOR JASMA. I HAVE ONE HEAD OF CATTLE. PLEASE ACCEPT IT AND LOOK AFTER MY LITTLE FLOWER.
BHALO WAS MOVED BY DALO'S WORDS AND TONE.
CATTLE OR NO CATTLE, JASMA SHALL BECOME MY DAUGHTER-IN-LAW!

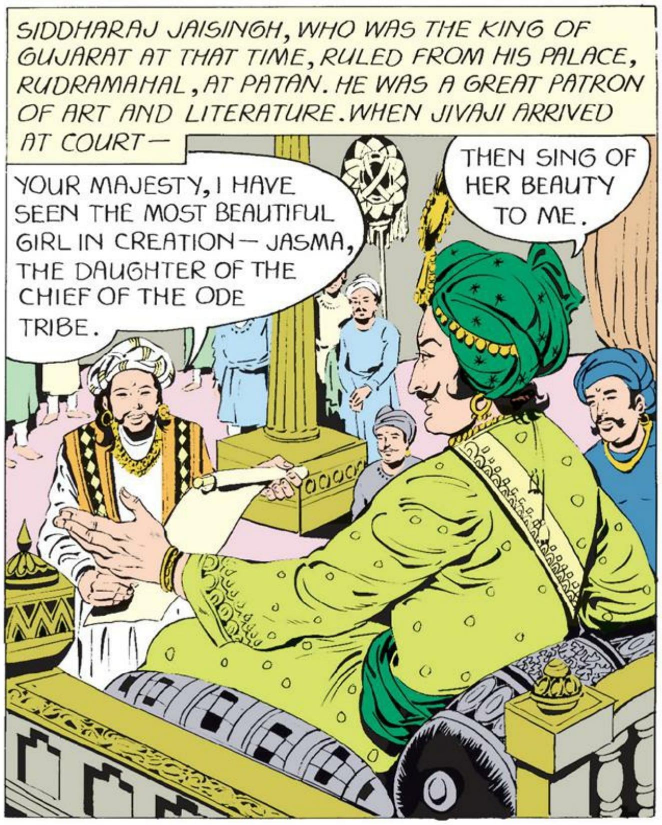

ON THE DAY OF THE WEDDING —
OH GOD! MY HUSBAND IS A CRIPPLE! WHAT A CRUEL FATE!

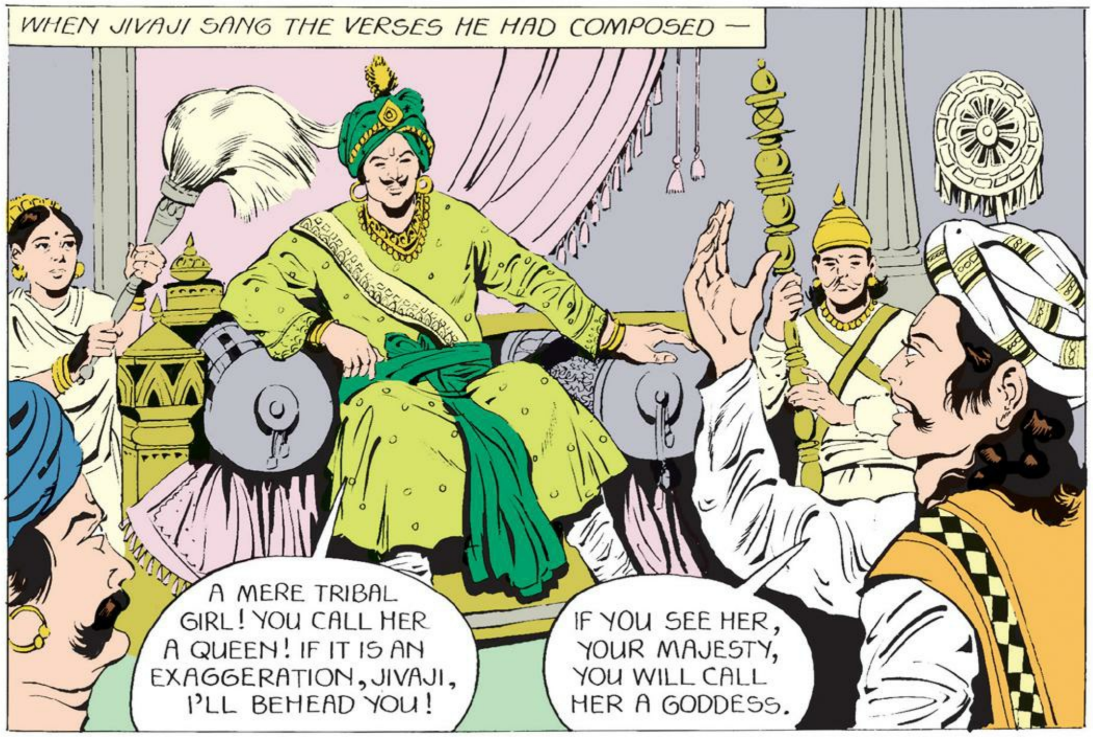

SHE CONTROLLED HERSELF, HOWEVER, AND WENT THROUGH THE CEREMONY. BUT THAT NIGHT WHEN SHE SAW HIS FACE CLEARLY FOR THE FIRST TIME, SHE BROKE DOWN.
HE'S UGLY TOO! ALAS! WHAT HAVE I DONE TO DESERVE THIS?

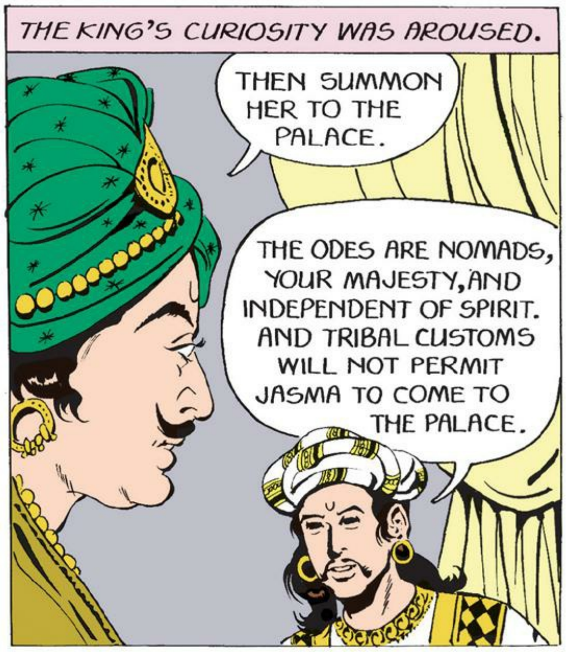

RUPA'S HIDEOUS FORM, HOWEVER, HID A HEART OF GOLD.
JASMA, FORGIVE ME. I KNOW HOW YOU MUST FEEL. I WILL TRY TO MAKE YOU AS HAPPY AS I CAN. PLEASE DON'T WEEP. I CAN'T BEAR TO SEE YOU WEEP.


JASMA WAS MOVED BY HIS WORDS. ASHAMED OF HERSELF, SHE FELL AT HIS FEET.
I AM SORRY, RUPA. I SHOULD ASK YOUR FORGIVENESS. I WILL BE A LOYAL WIFE TO YOU AND WILL LOOK AFTER ALL YOUR NEEDS.
A FEW MONTHS LATER, JIVAJI BAROT, A COURT POET OF GUJARAT, HAPPENED TO PASS BY THE ODE CAMP.
WHAT A BEAUTIFUL GIRL! I HAVE NEVER SEEN ANYONE LIKE HER.
HE TURNED TO A LITTLE BOY NEAR BY.
WHO IS THAT GIRL?
SHE IS JASMA. NAYAK DALO'S DAUGHTER, RUPA'S WIFE.


JIVAJI WAS SO IMPRESSED BY HER BEAUTY THAT HE COMPOSED SEVERAL VERSES ON HER.
I WILL PRESENT THESE VERSES TO THE KING AT COURT.

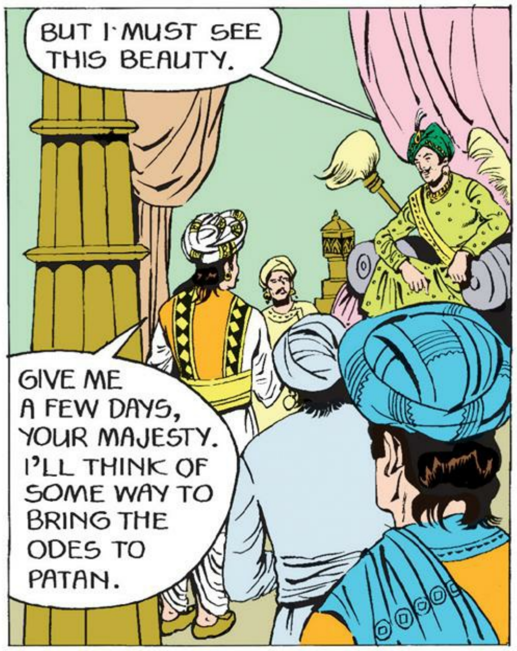

SIDDHARAJ JAISINGH, WHO WAS THE KING OF GUJARAT AT THAT TIME, RULED FROM HIS PALACE, RUDRAMAHAL, AT PATAN. HE WAS A GREAT PATRON OF ART AND LITERATURE. WHEN JIVAJI ARRIVED AT COURT—
YOUR MAJESTY, I HAVE SEEN THE MOST BEAUTIFUL GIRL IN CREATION—JASMA, THE DAUGHTER OF THE CHIEF OF THE ODE TRIBE.
THEN SING OF HER BEAUTY TO ME.


WHEN JIVAJI SANG THE VERSES HE HAD COMPOSED —
A MERE TRIBAL GIRL! YOU CALL HER A QUEEN! IF IT IS AN EXAGGERATION, JIVAJI, I'LL BEHEAD YOU!
IF YOU SEE HER, YOUR MAJESTY, YOU WILL CALL HER A GODDESS.

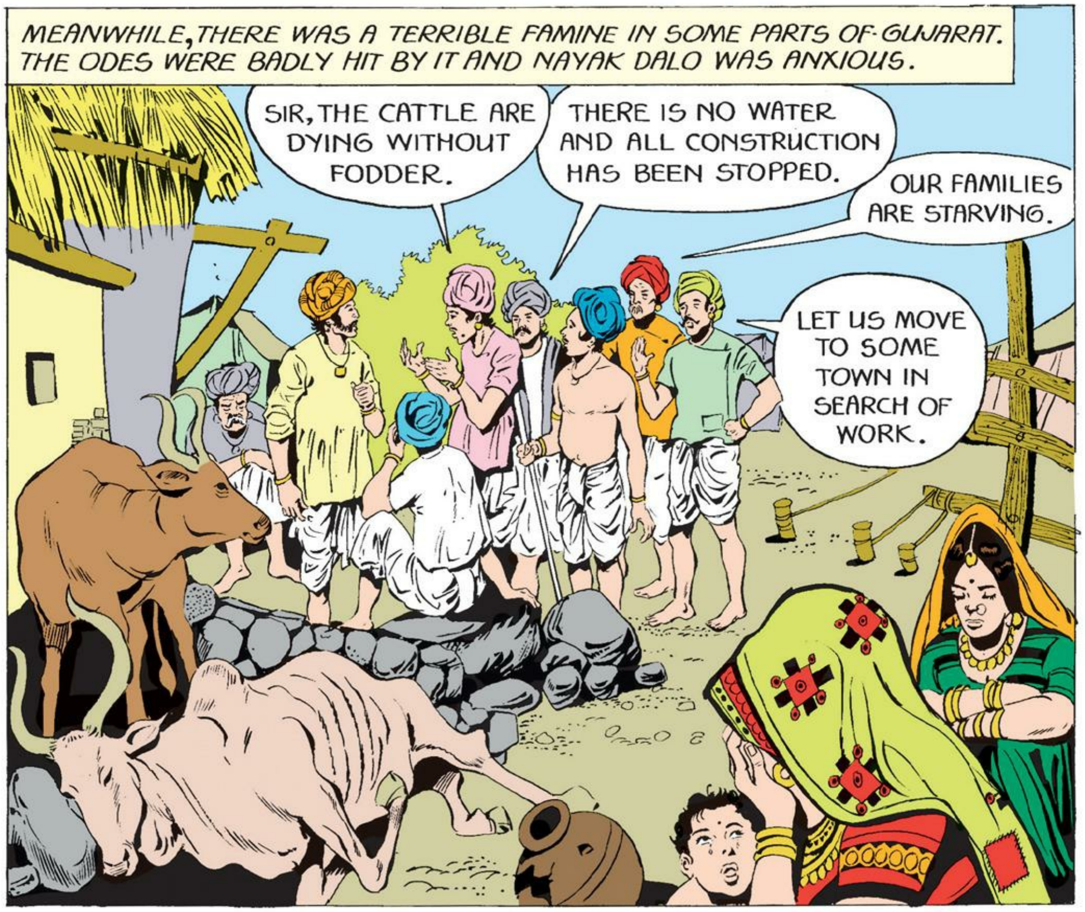


THE KING'S CURIOSITY WAS AROUSED.

THEN SUMMON HER TO THE PALACE.
THE ODES ARE NOMADS, YOUR MAJESTY, AND INDEPENDENT OF SPIRIT. AND TRIBAL CUSTOMS WILL NOT PERMIT JASMA TO COME TO THE PALACE.

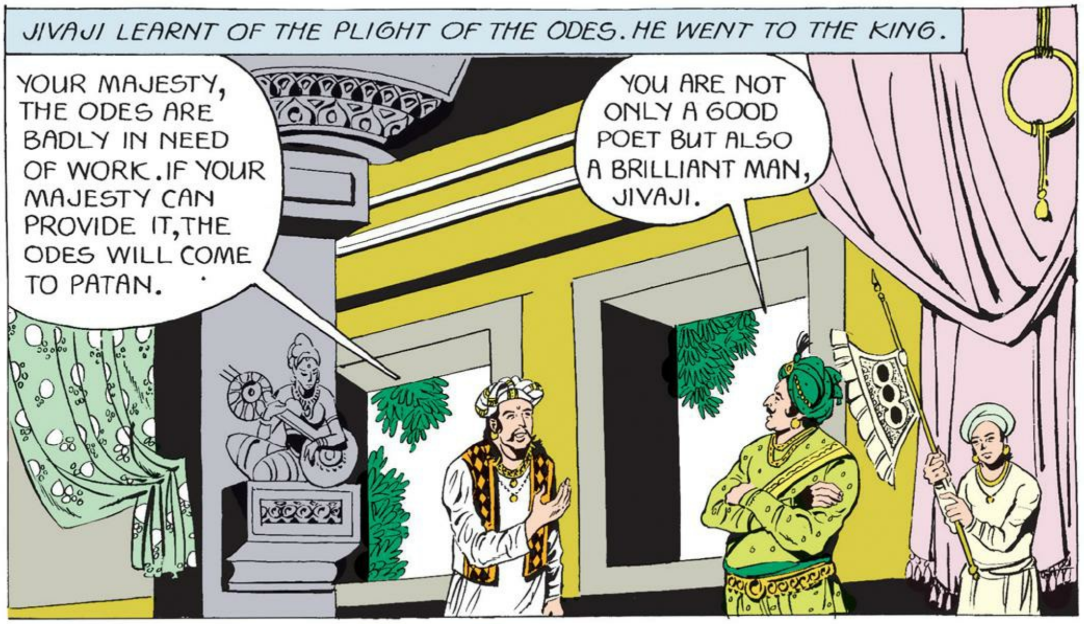


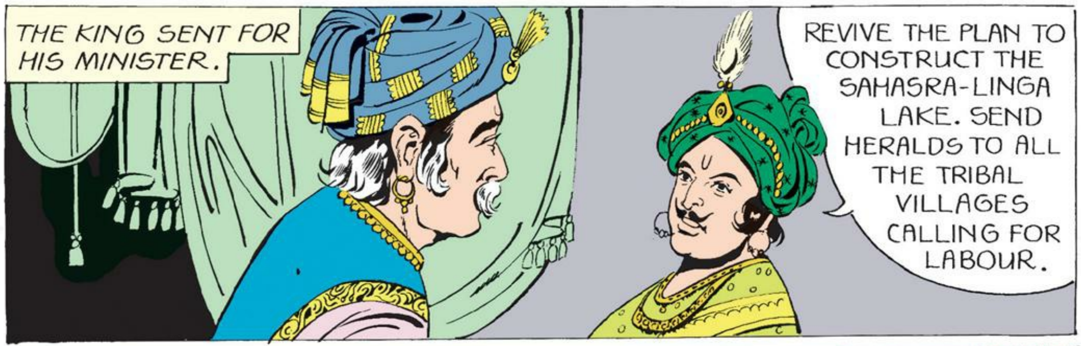
BUT I MUST SEE THIS BEAUTY.
GIVE ME A FEW DAYS, YOUR MAJESTY. I'LL THINK OF SOME WAY TO BRING THE ODES TO PATAN.

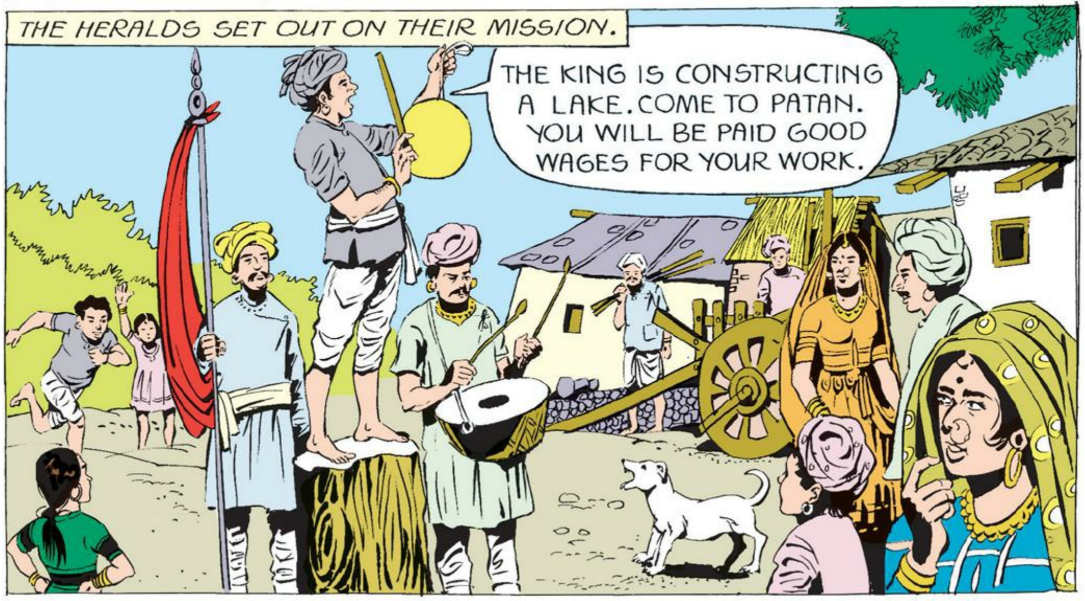


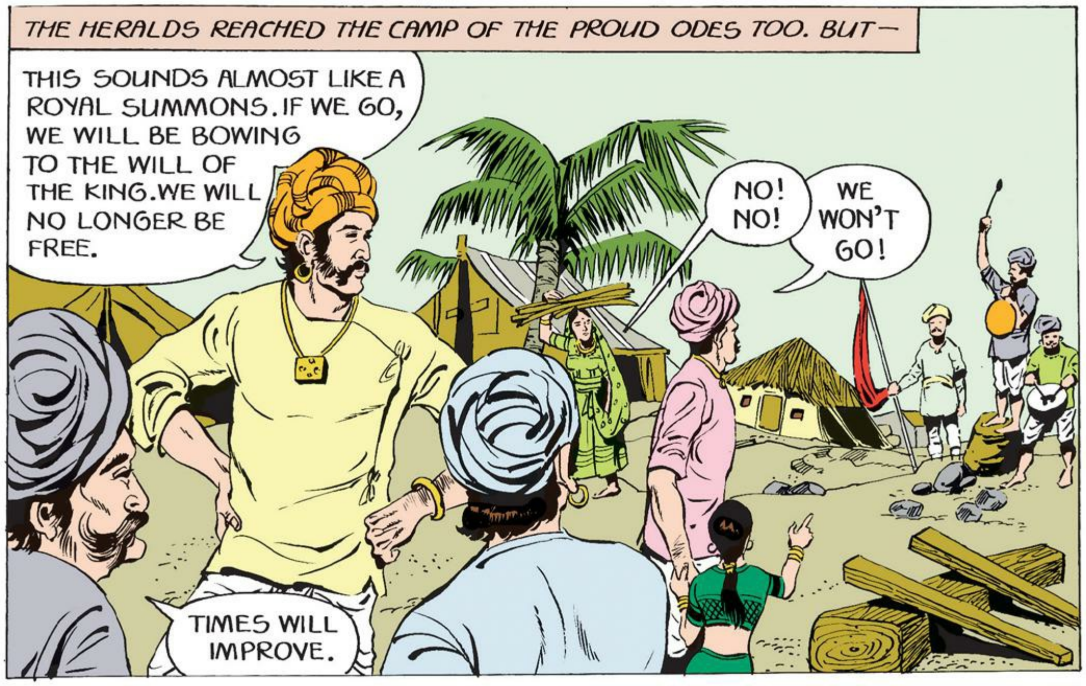
MEANWHILE, THERE WAS A TERRIBLE FAMINE IN SOME PARTS OF GUJARAT. THE ODES WERE BADLY HIT BY IT AND NAYAK DALO WAS ANXIOUS.

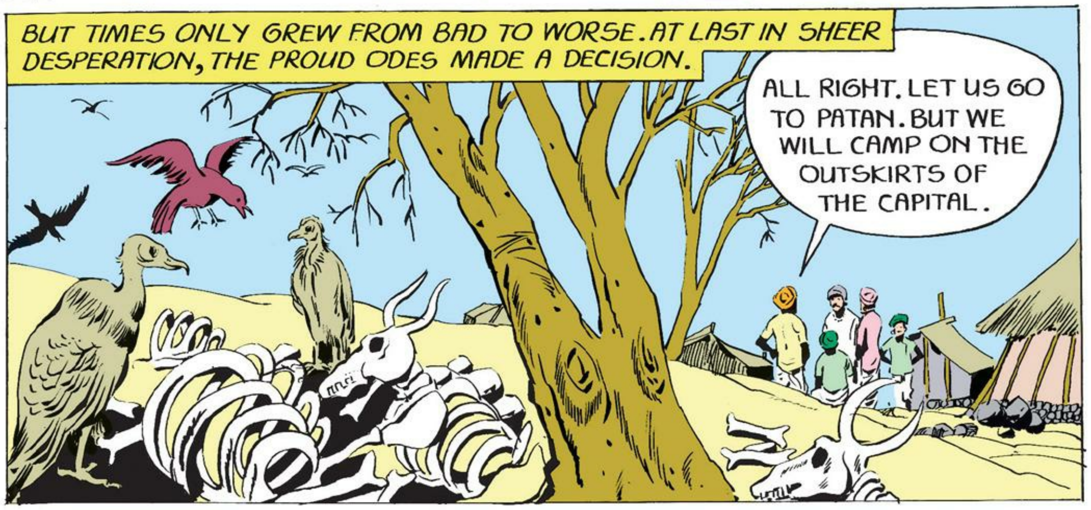
SIR, THE CATTLE ARE DYING WITHOUT FODDER.
THERE IS NO WATER AND ALL CONSTRUCTION HAS BEEN STOPPED.
OUR FAMILIES ARE STARVING.
LET US MOVE TO SOME TOWN IN SEARCH OF WORK.

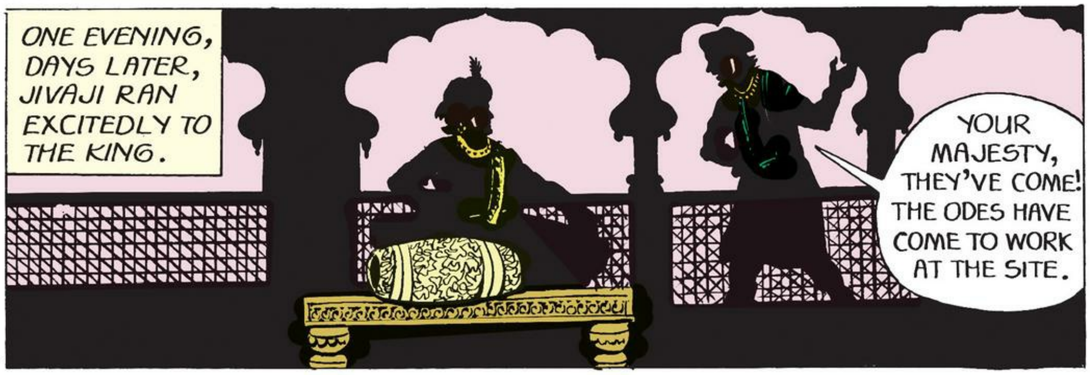

JIVAJI LEARNT OF THE PLIGHT OF THE ODES. HE WENT TO THE KING.
YOUR MAJESTY, THE ODES ARE BADLY IN NEED OF WORK. IF YOUR MAJESTY CAN PROVIDE IT, THE ODES WILL COME TO PATAN.
YOU ARE NOT ONLY A GOOD POET BUT ALSO A BRILLIANT MAN, JIVAJI.

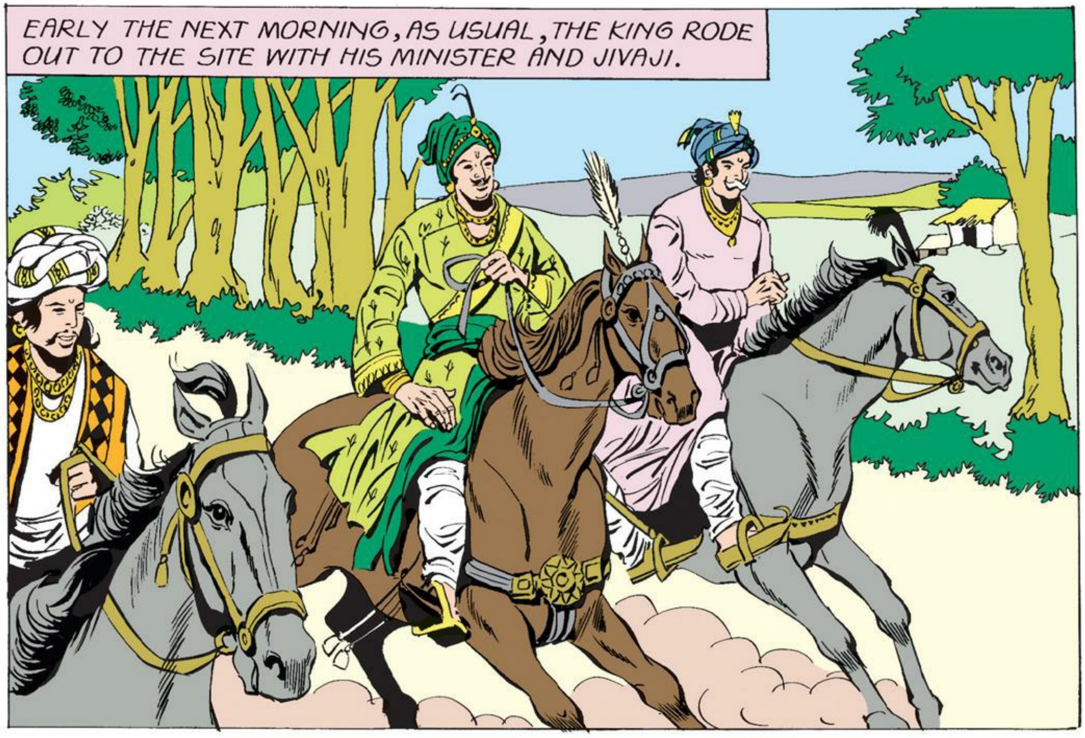

THE KING SENT FOR HIS MINISTER.
REVIVE THE PLAN TO CONSTRUCT THE SAHASRA-LINGA LAKE. SEND HERALDS TO ALL THE TRIBAL VILLAGES CALLING FOR LABOUR.

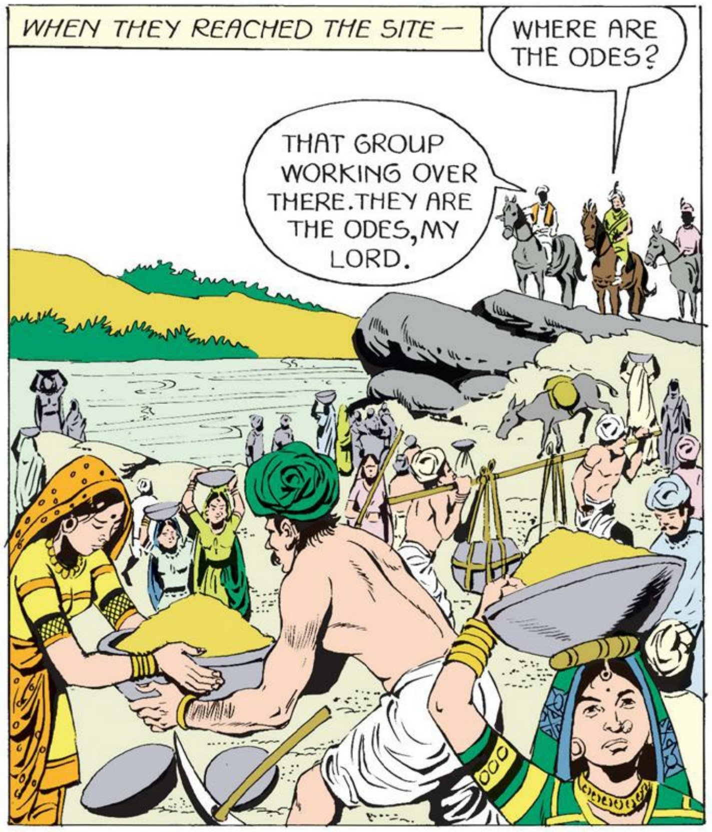

THE HERALDS SET OUT ON THEIR MISSION.
THE KING IS CONSTRUCTING A LAKE. COME TO PATAN. YOU WILL BE PAID GOOD WAGES FOR YOUR WORK.

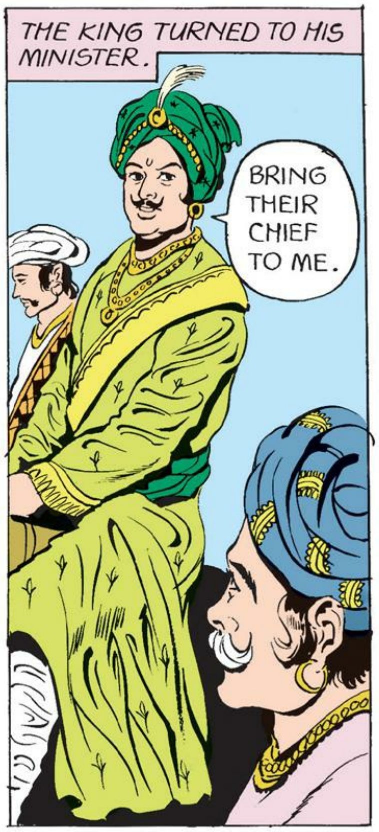

THE HERALDS REACHED THE CAMP OF THE PROUD ODES TOO. BUT—
THIS SOUNDS ALMOST LIKE A ROYAL SUMMONS. IF WE GO, WE WILL BE BOWING TO THE WILL OF THE KING. WE WILL NO LONGER BE FREE.
NO! NO!
WE WON'T GO!
TIMES WILL IMPROVE.

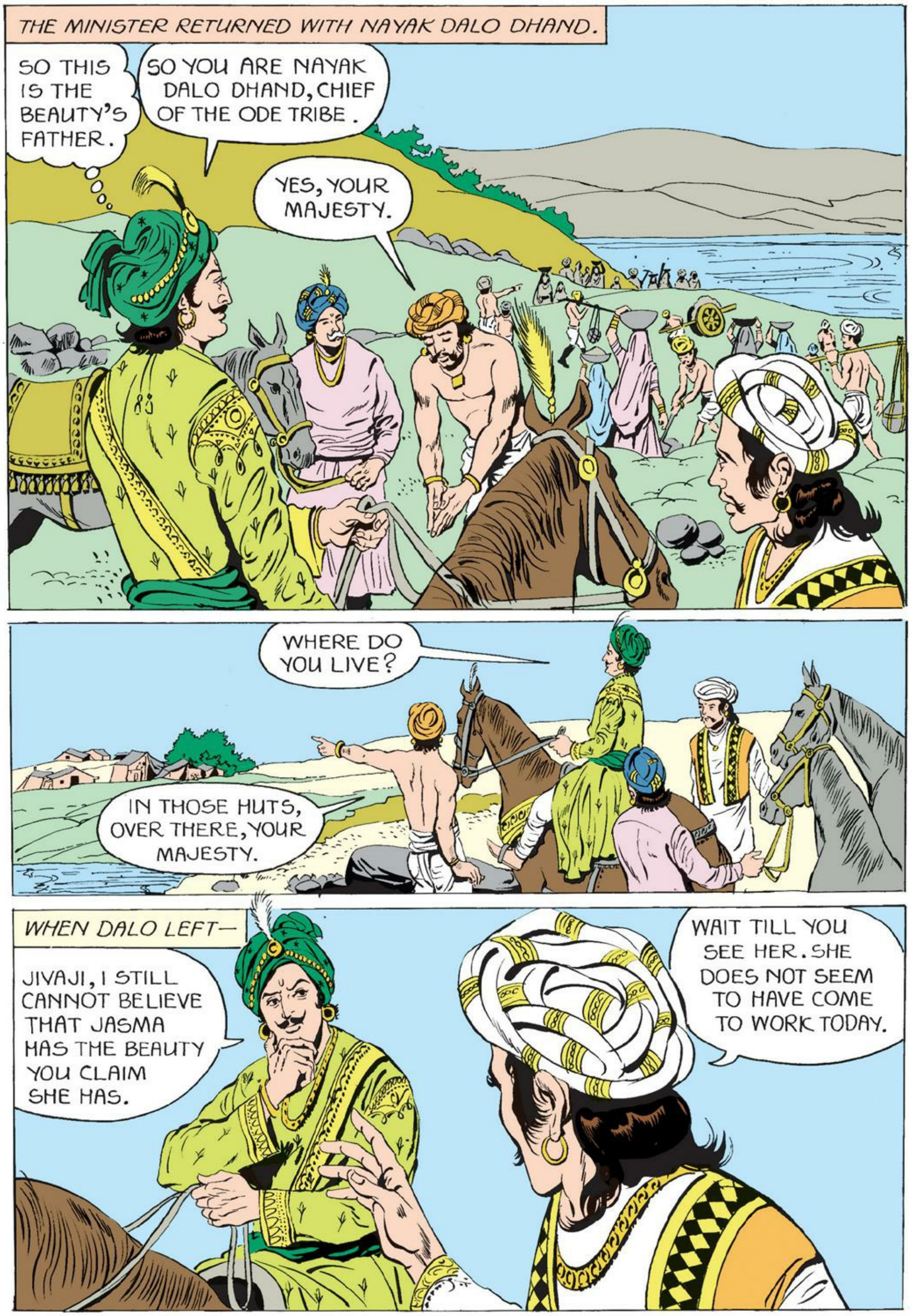

BUT TIMES ONLY GREW FROM BAD TO WORSE. AT LAST IN SHEER DESPERATION, THE PROUD ODES MADE A DECISION.
ALL RIGHT. LET US GO TO PATAN. BUT WE WILL CAMP ON THE OUTSKIRTS OF THE CAPITAL.

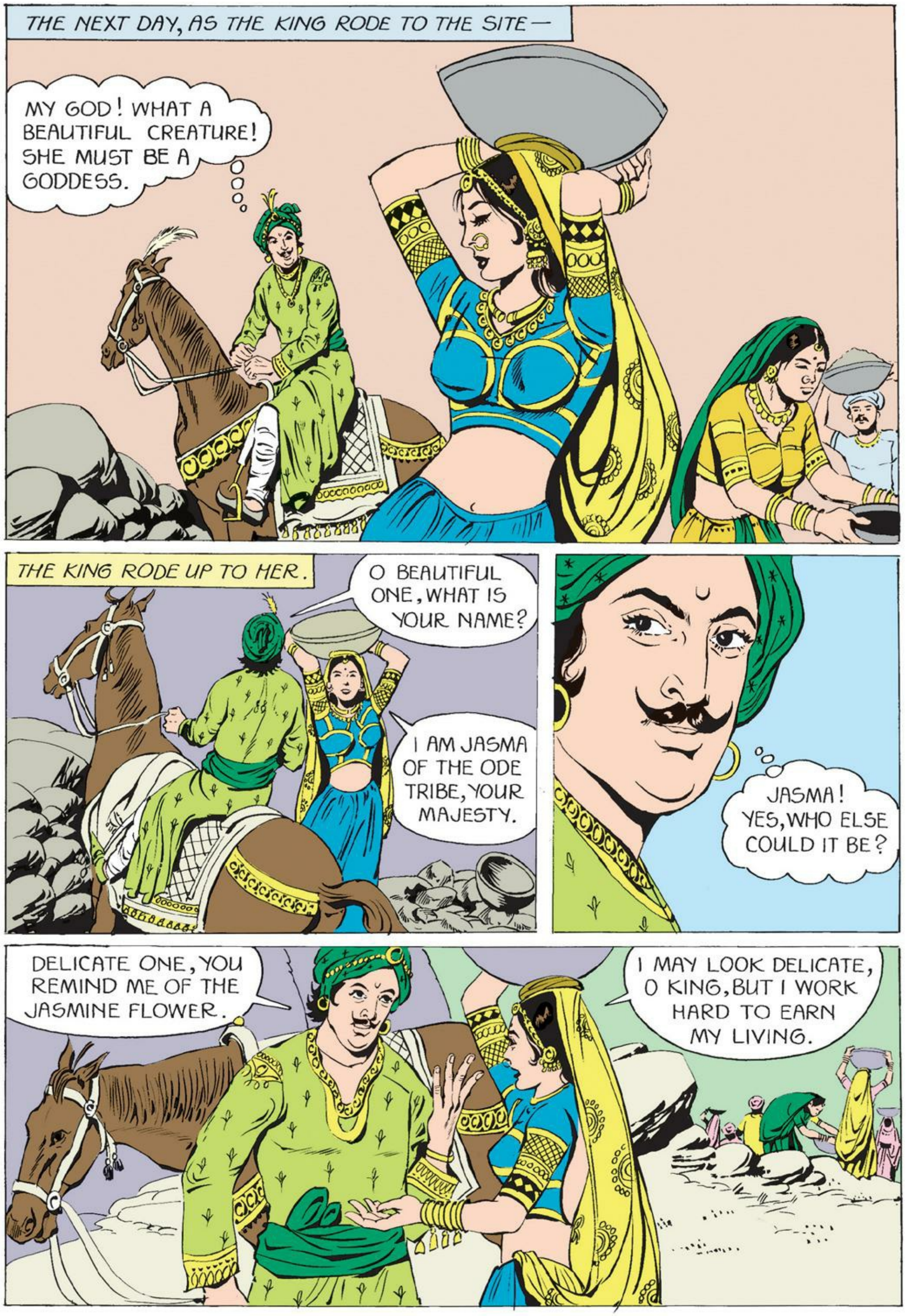

ONE EVENING, DAYS LATER, JIVAJI RAN EXCITEDLY TO THE KING.
YOUR MAJESTY, THEY'VE COME! THE ODES HAVE COME TO WORK AT THE SITE.

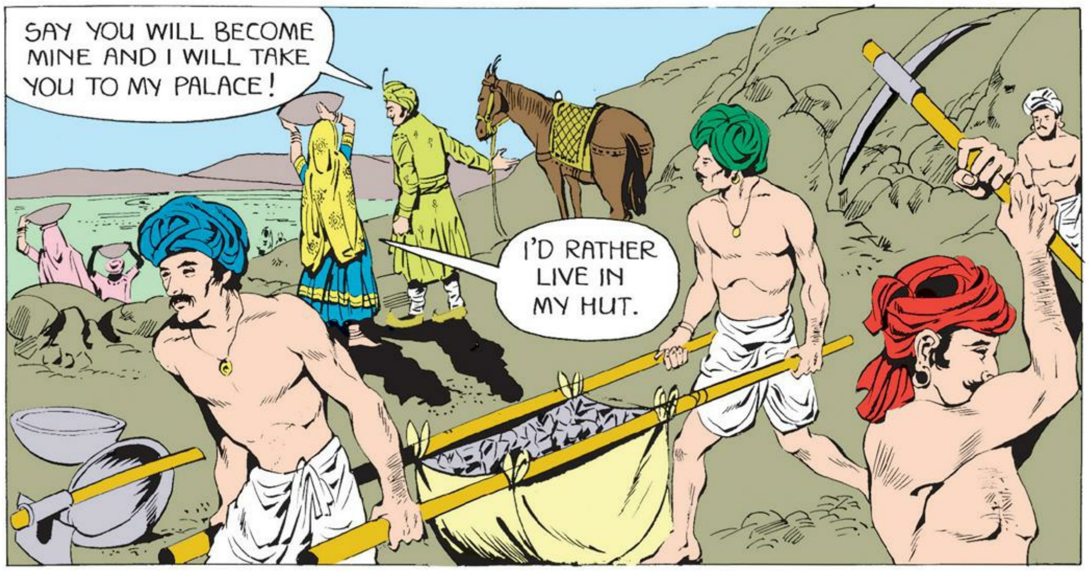

EARLY THE NEXT MORNING, AS USUAL, THE KING RODE OUT TO THE SITE WITH HIS MINISTER AND JIVAJI.

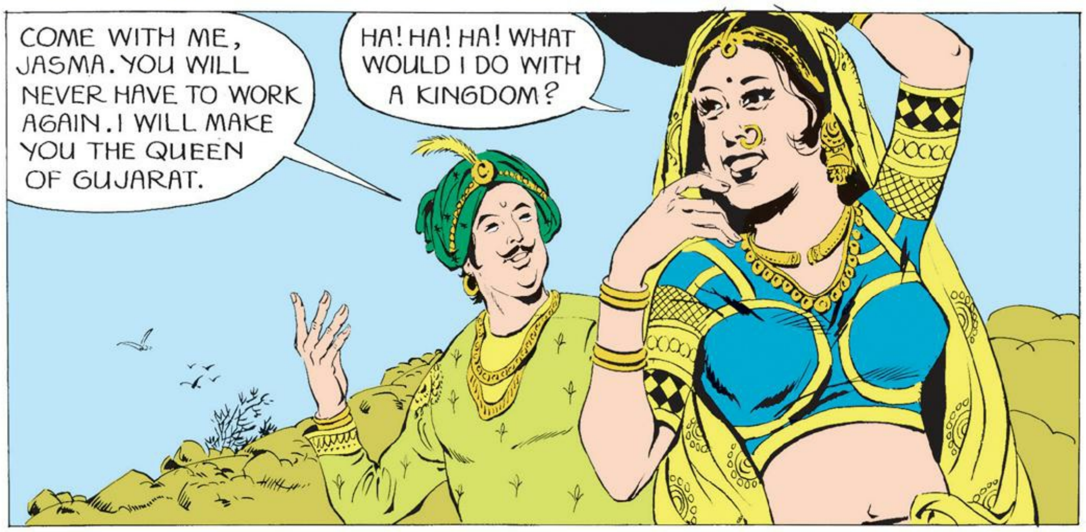

WHEN THEY REACHED THE SITE —
WHERE ARE THE ODES?
THAT GROUP WORKING OVER THERE. THEY ARE THE ODES, MY LORD.

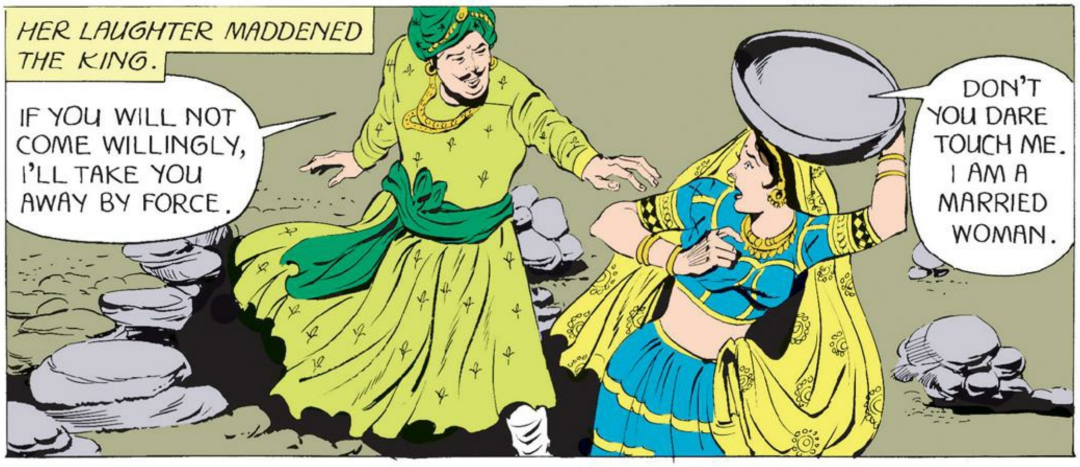

THE KING TURNED TO HIS MINISTER.
BRING THEIR CHIEF TO ME.

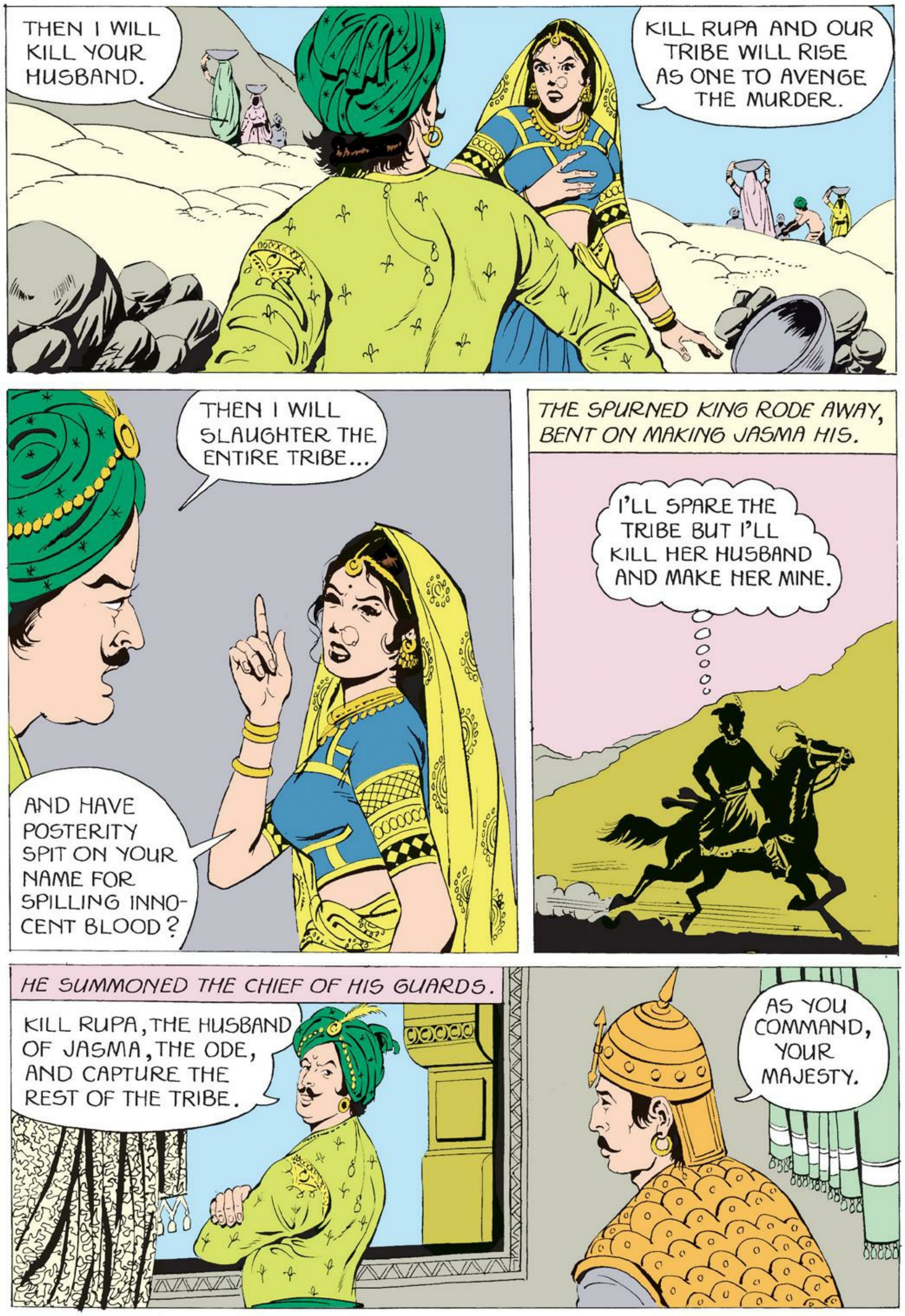

THE MINISTER RETURNED WITH NAYAK DALO DHAND.
SO THIS IS THE BEAUTY'S FATHER.
SO YOU ARE NAYAK DALO DHAND, CHIEF OF THE ODE TRIBE.
YES, YOUR MAJESTY.
WHERE DO YOU LIVE?
IN THOSE HUTS, OVER THERE, YOUR MAJESTY.
WHEN DALO LEFT—
JIVAJI, I STILL CANNOT BELIEVE THAT JASMA HAS THE BEAUTY YOU CLAIM SHE HAS.
WAIT TILL YOU SEE HER. SHE DOES NOT SEEM TO HAVE COME TO WORK TODAY.

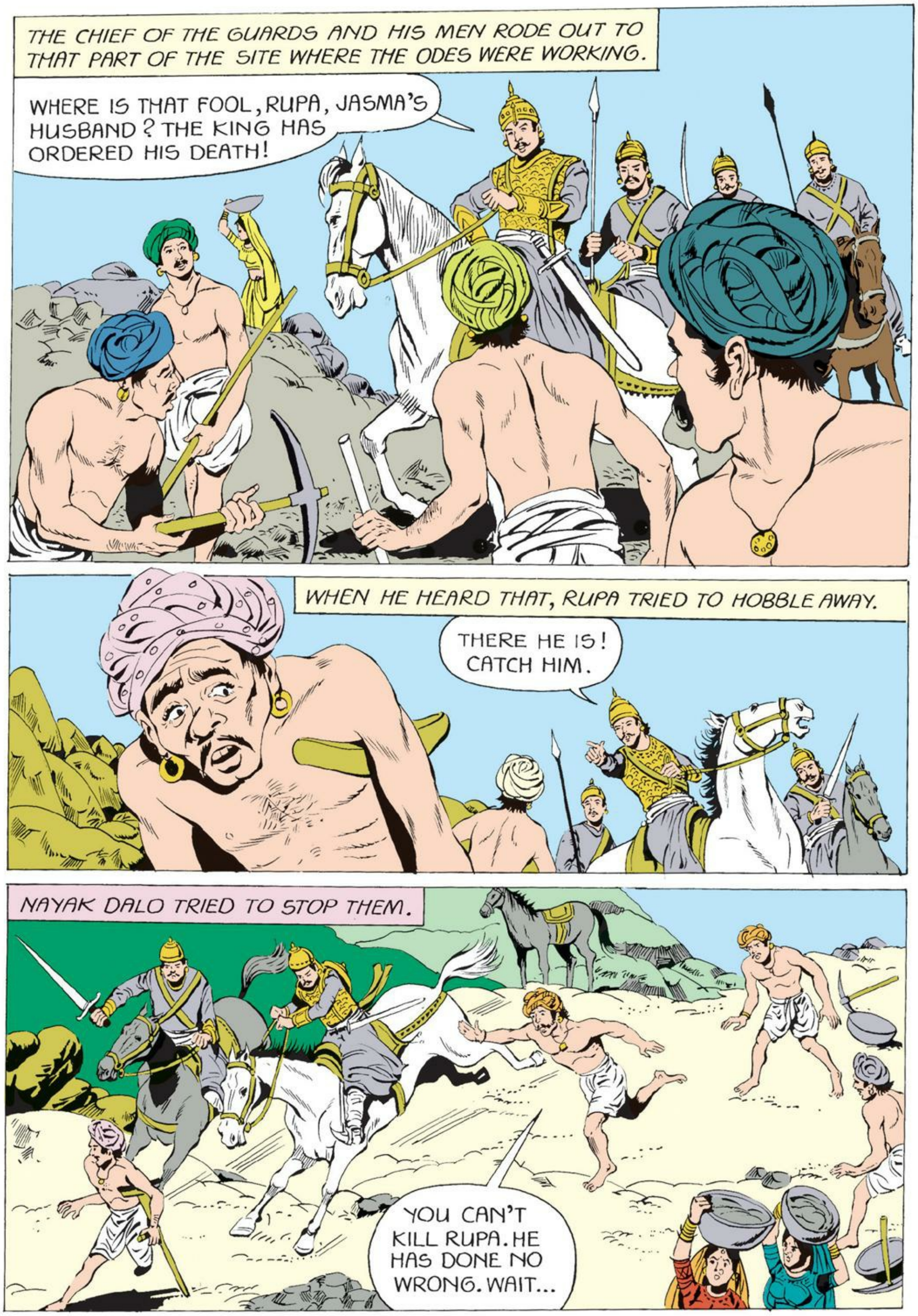

THE NEXT DAY, AS THE KING RODE TO THE SITE—
MY GOD! WHAT A BEAUTIFUL CREATURE! SHE MUST BE A GODDESS.
THE KING RODE UP TO HER.
O BEAUTIFUL ONE, WHAT IS YOUR NAME?
I AM JASMA OF THE ODE TRIBE, YOUR MAJESTY.
JASMA! YES, WHO ELSE COULD IT BE?
DELICATE ONE, YOU REMIND ME OF THE JASMINE FLOWER.
I MAY LOOK DELICATE, O KING, BUT I WORK HARD TO EARN MY LIVING.

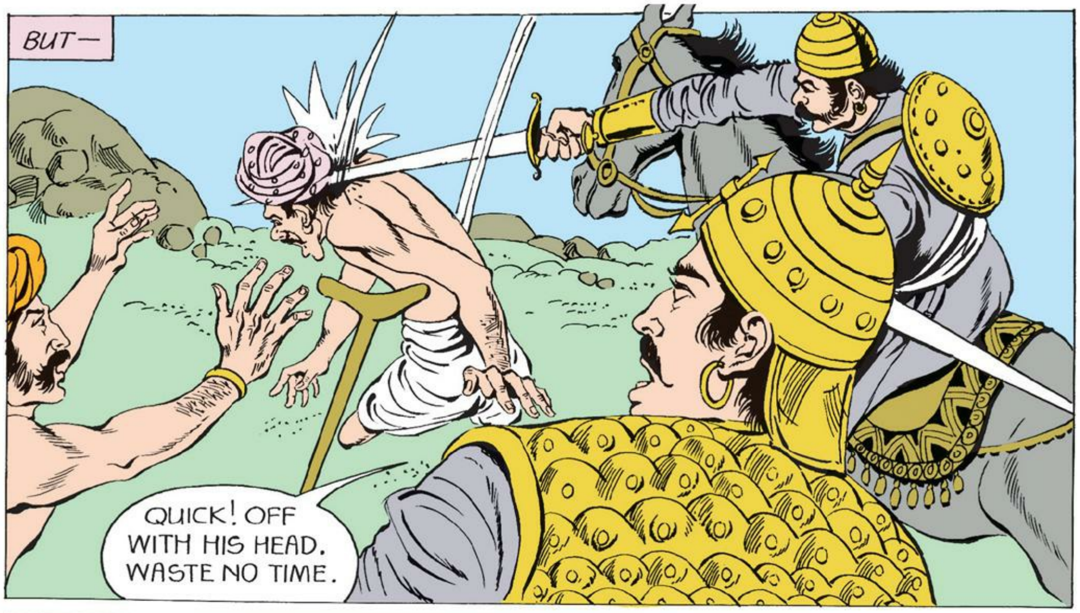

SAY YOU WILL BECOME MINE AND I WILL TAKE YOU TO MY PALACE!
I'D RATHER LIVE IN MY HUT.

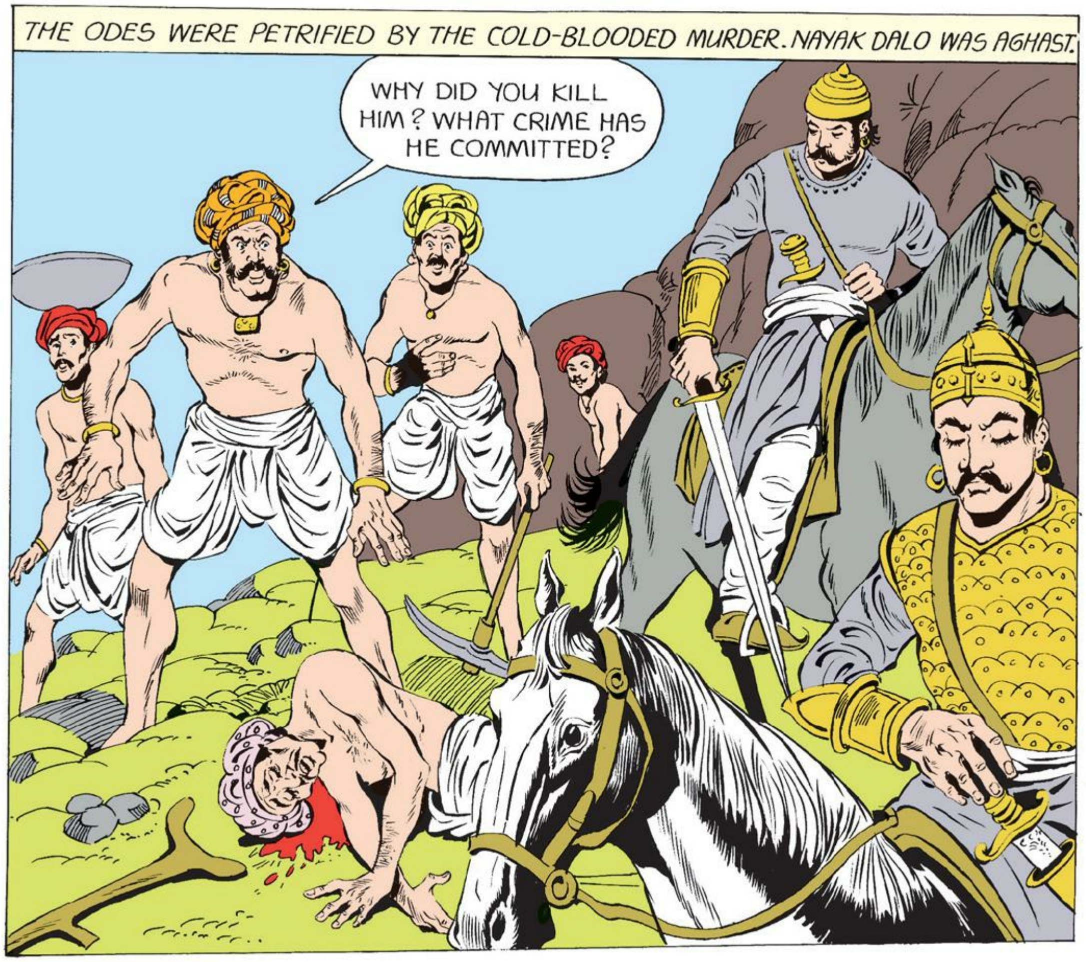

COME WITH ME, JASMA. YOU WILL NEVER HAVE TO WORK AGAIN. I WILL MAKE YOU THE QUEEN OF GUJARAT.
HA! HA! HA! WHAT WOULD I DO WITH A KINGDOM?

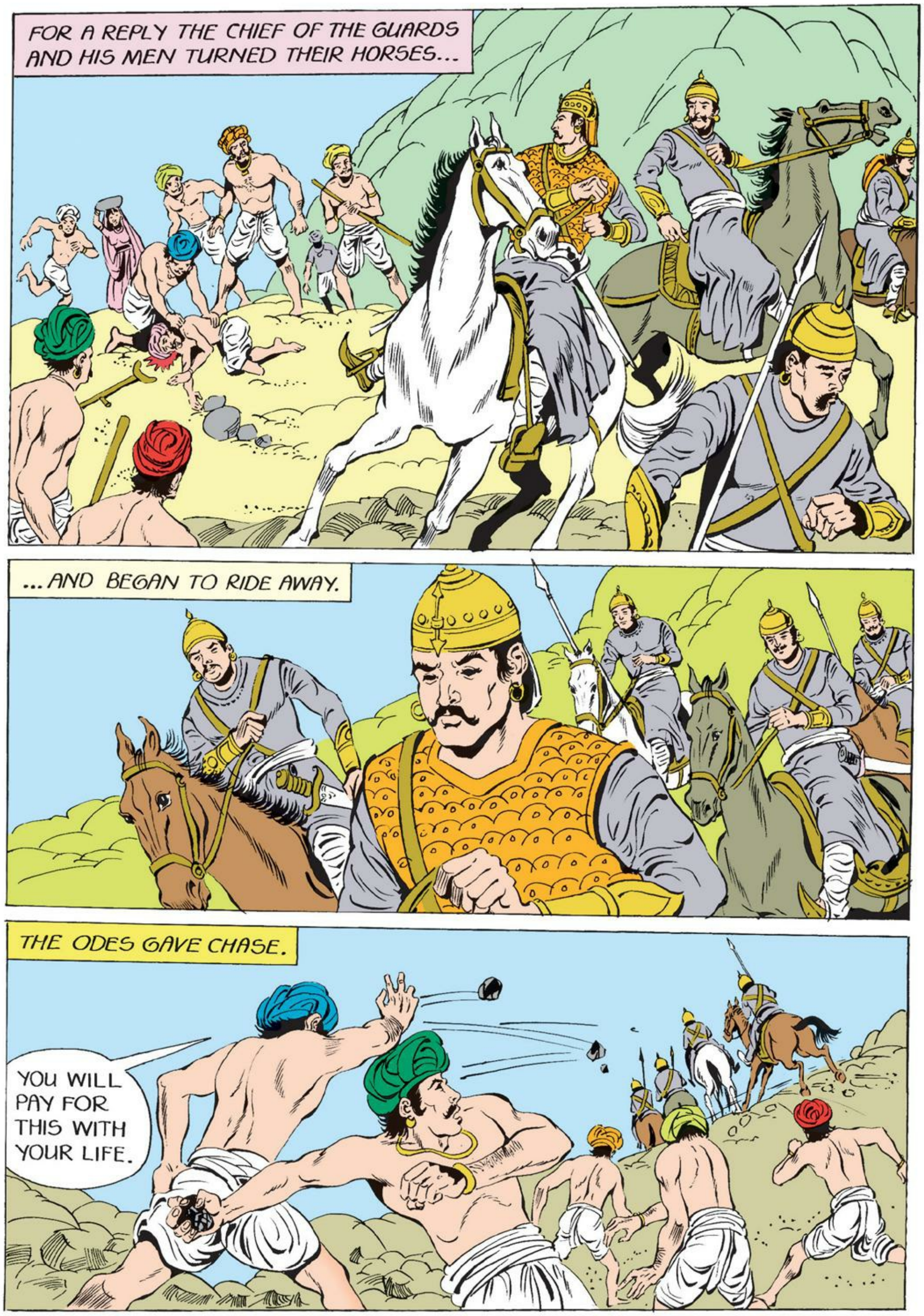

HER LAUGHTER MADDENED THE KING.
IF YOU WILL NOT COME WILLINGLY, I'LL TAKE YOU AWAY BY FORCE.
DON'T YOU DARE TOUCH ME. I AM A MARRIED WOMAN.

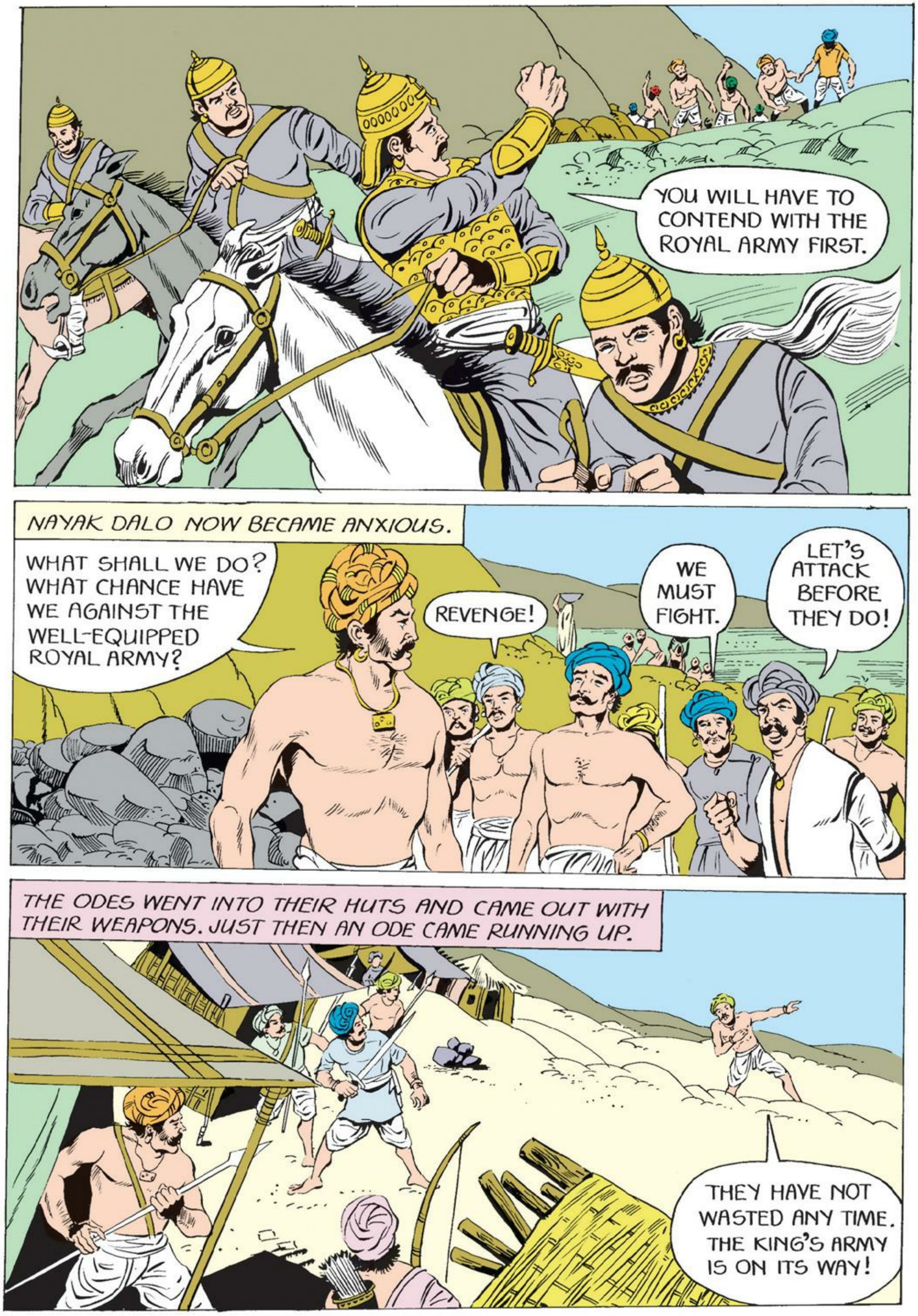

THEN I WILL KILL YOUR HUSBAND.
KILL RUPA AND OUR TRIBE WILL RISE AS ONE TO AVENGE THE MURDER.
THEN I WILL SLAUGHTER THE ENTIRE TRIBE...
AND HAVE POSTERITY SPIT ON YOUR NAME FOR SPILLING INNOCENT BLOOD?
THE SPURNED KING RODE AWAY, BENT ON MAKING JASMA HIS.
I'LL SPARE THE TRIBE BUT I'LL KILL HER HUSBAND AND MAKE HER MINE.
HE SUMMONED THE CHIEF OF HIS GUARDS.
KILL RUPA, THE HUSBAND OF JASMA, THE ODE, AND CAPTURE THE REST OF THE TRIBE.
AS YOU COMMAND, YOUR MAJESTY.


THE CHIEF OF THE GUARDS AND HIS MEN RODE OUT TO THAT PART OF THE SITE WHERE THE ODES WERE WORKING.
WHERE IS THAT FOOL, RUPA, JASMA'S HUSBAND ? THE KING HAS ORDERED HIS DEATH!
WHEN HE HEARD THAT, RUPA TRIED TO HOBBLE AWAY.
THERE HE IS! CATCH HIM.
NAYAK DALO TRIED TO STOP THEM.
YOU CAN'T KILL RUPA. HE HAS DONE NO WRONG. WAIT...

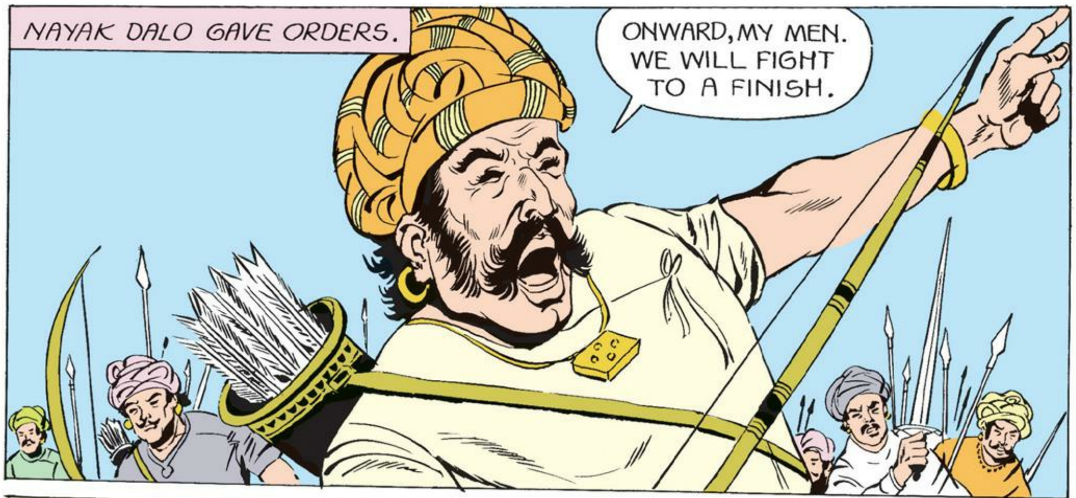

BUT—
QUICK! OFF WITH HIS HEAD. WASTE NO TIME.


THE ODES WERE PETRIFIED BY THE COLD-BLOODED MURDER. NAYAK DALO WAS AGHAST.
WHY DID YOU KILL HIM? WHAT CRIME HAS HE COMMITTED?

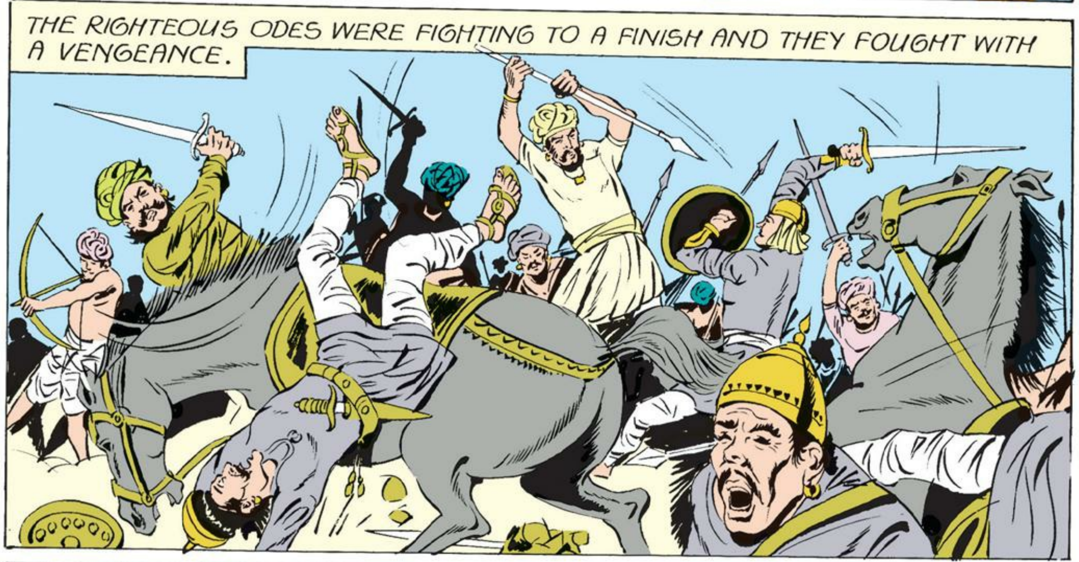

FOR A REPLY THE CHIEF OF THE GUARDS AND HIS MEN TURNED THEIR HORSES...
...AND BEGAN TO RIDE AWAY.
THE ODES GAVE CHASE.
YOU WILL PAY FOR THIS WITH YOUR LIFE.


YOU WILL HAVE TO CONTEND WITH THE ROYAL ARMY FIRST.
NAYAK DALO NOW BECAME ANXIOUS.
WHAT SHALL WE DO? WHAT CHANCE HAVE WE AGAINST THE WELL-EQUIPPED ROYAL ARMY?
REVENGE!
WE MUST FIGHT.
LET'S ATTACK BEFORE THEY DO!
THE ODES WENT INTO THEIR HUTS AND CAME OUT WITH THEIR WEAPONS. JUST THEN AN ODE CAME RUNNING UP.
THEY HAVE NOT WASTED ANY TIME. THE KING'S ARMY IS ON ITS WAY!

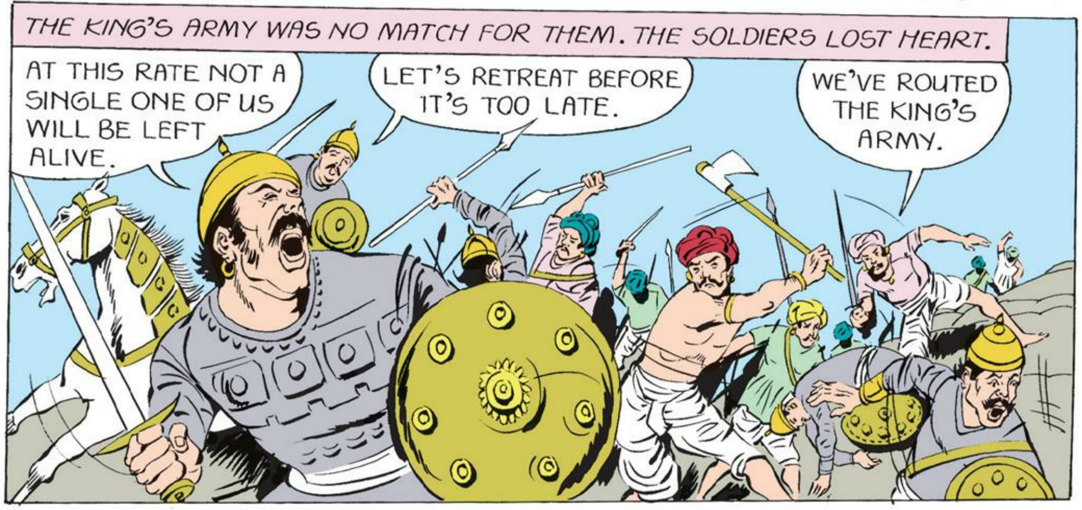
NAYAK DALO GAVE ORDERS.

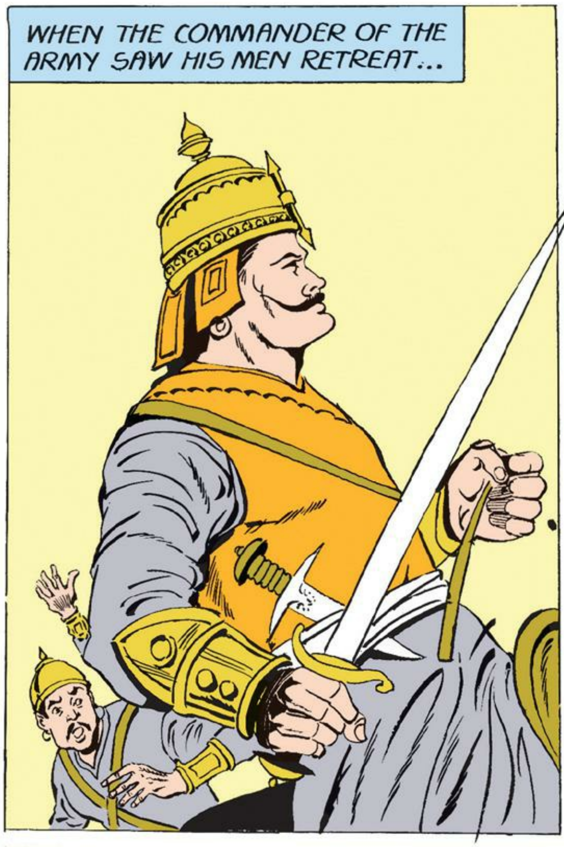

ONWARD, MY MEN. WE WILL FIGHT TO A FINISH.

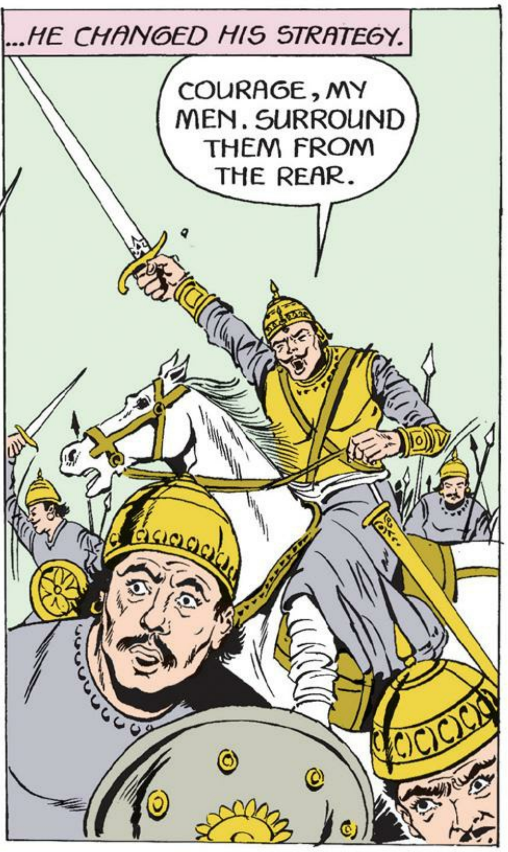
THE RIGHTEOUS ODES WERE FIGHTING TO A FINISH AND THEY FOUGHT WITH A VENGEANCE.

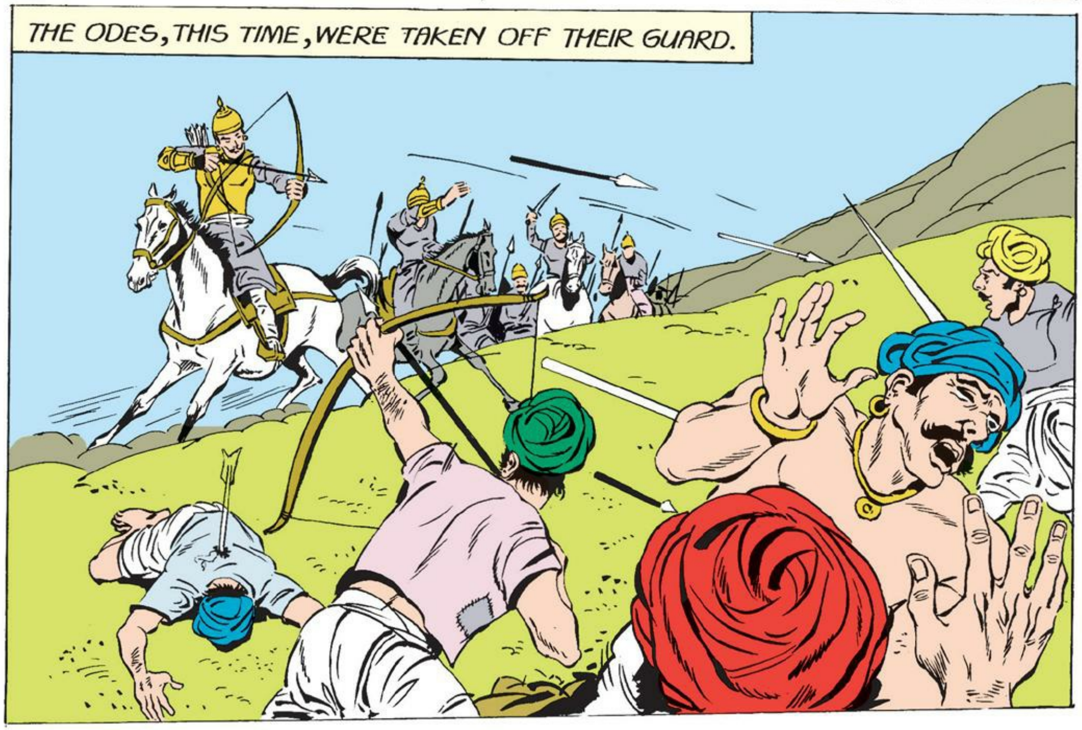


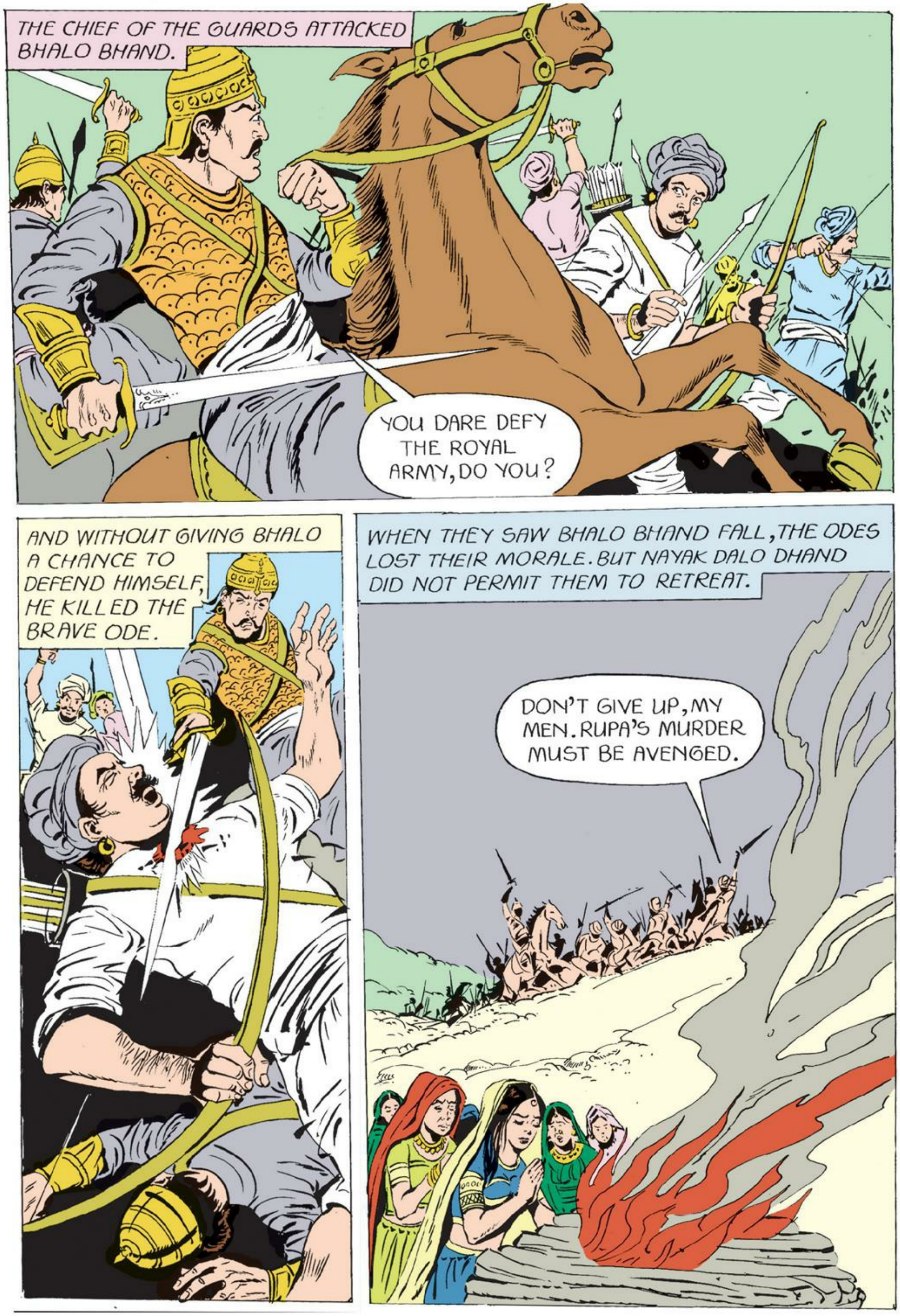
THE KING'S ARMY WAS NO MATCH FOR THEM. THE SOLDIERS LOST HEART.

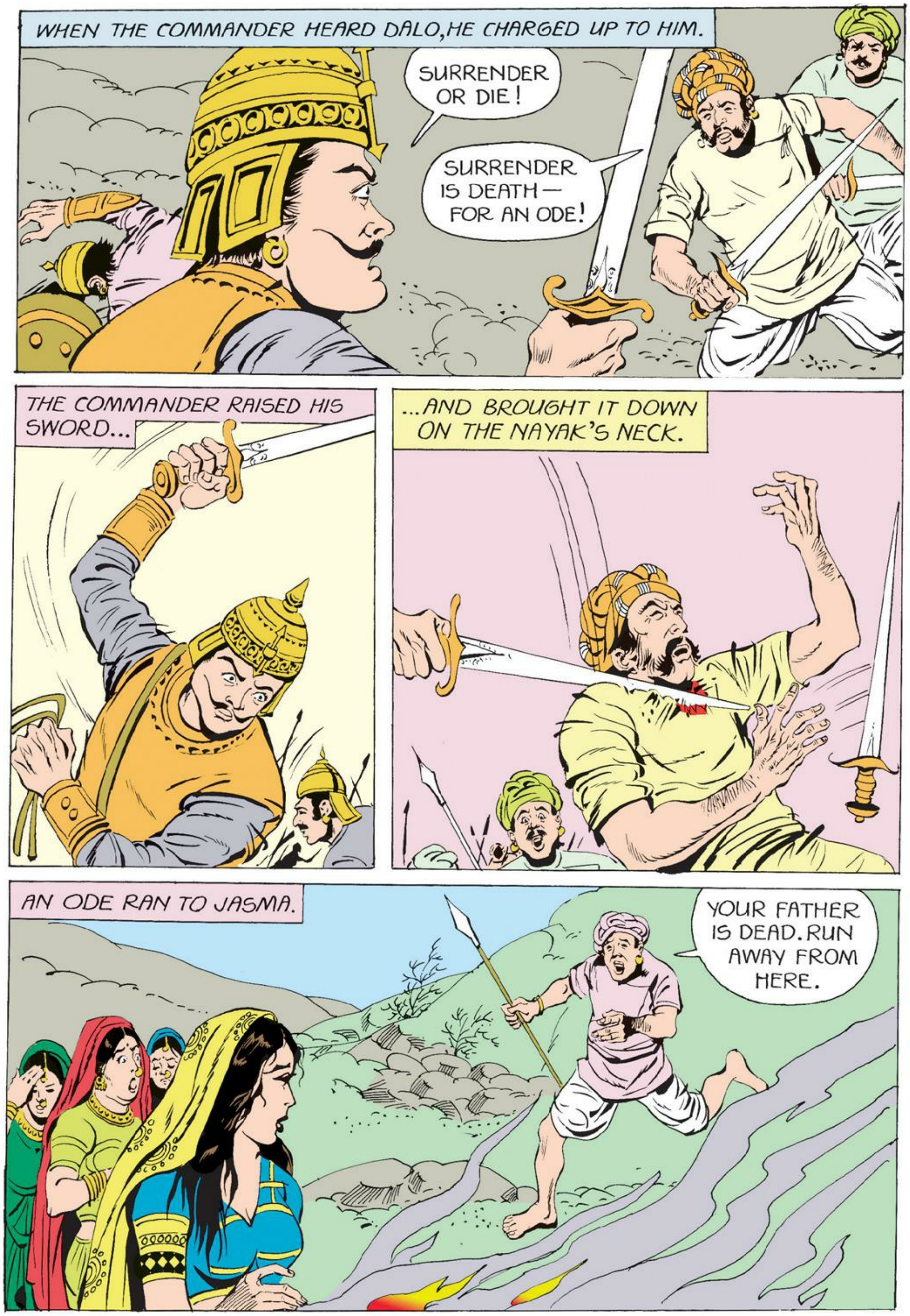

AT THIS RATE NOT A SINGLE ONE OF US WILL BE LEFT ALIVE.
LET'S RETREAT BEFORE IT'S TOO LATE.
WE'VE ROUTED THE KING'S ARMY.

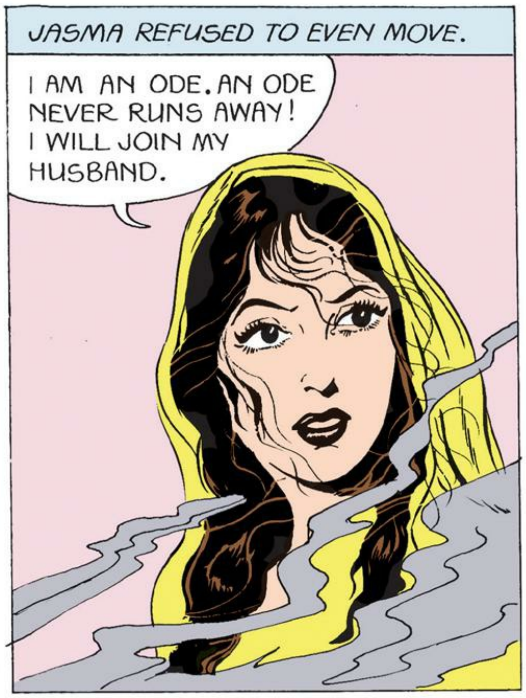

WHEN THE COMMANDER OF THE ARMY SAW HIS MEN RETREAT...

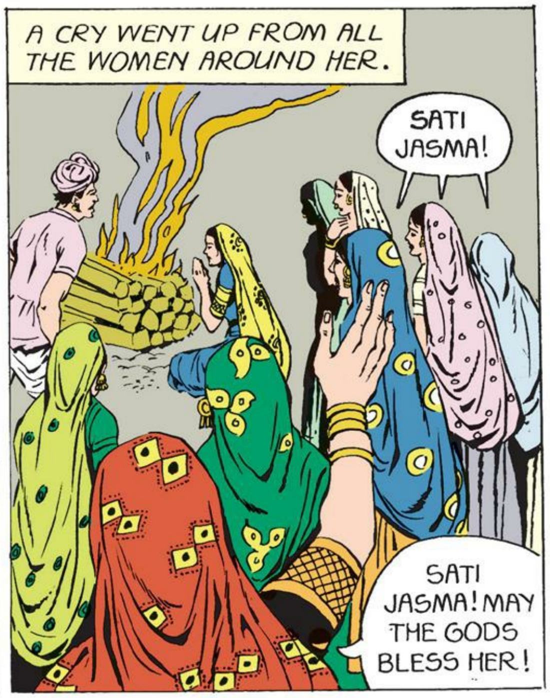

...HE CHANGED HIS STRATEGY.
COURAGE, MY MEN. SURROUND THEM FROM THE REAR.

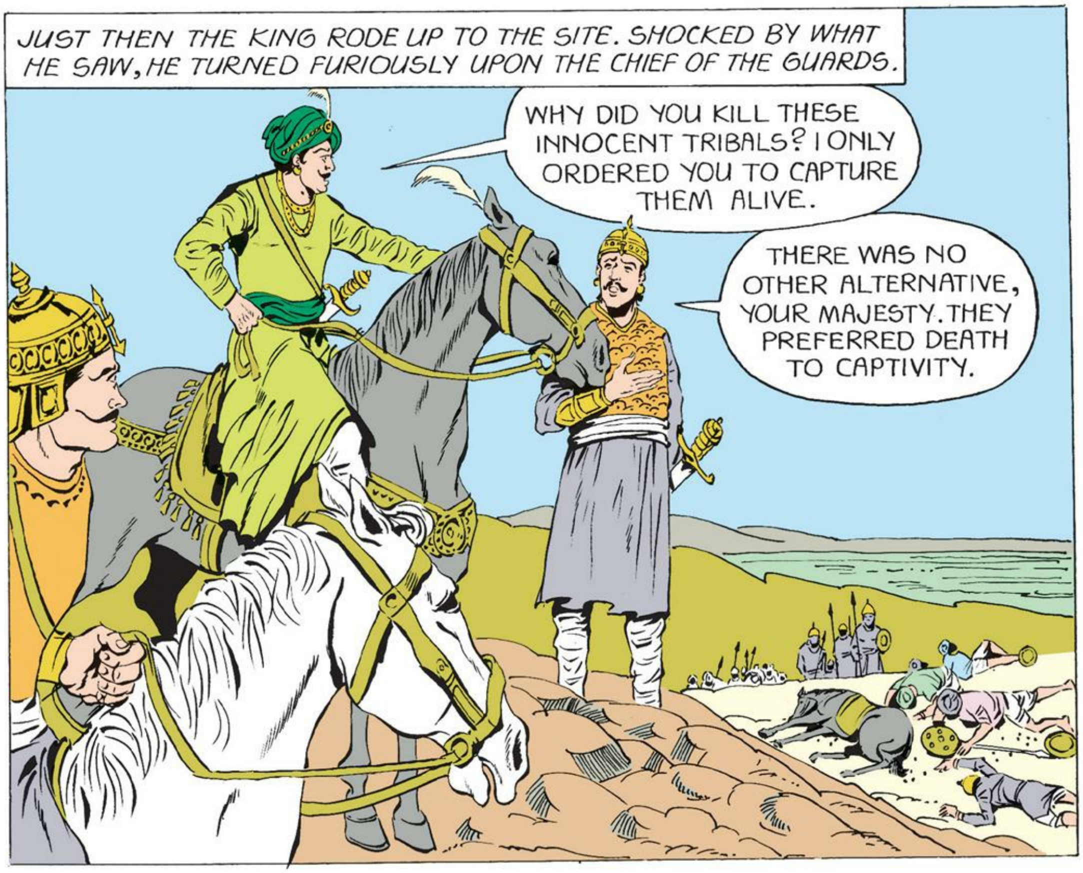

THE ODES, THIS TIME, WERE TAKEN OFF THEIR GUARD.

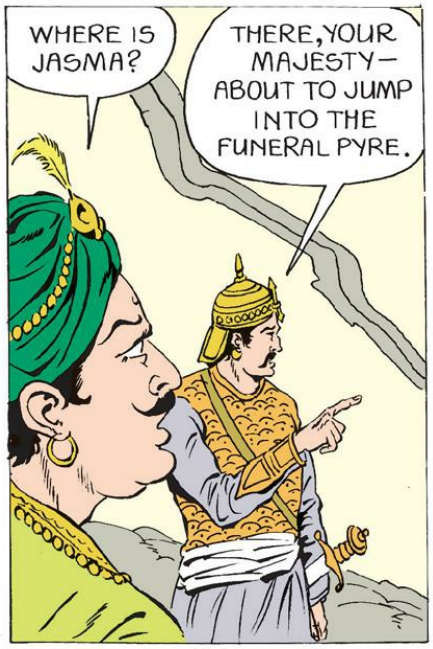

THE CHIEF OF THE GUARDS ATTACKED BHALO BHAND.
YOU DARE DEFY THE ROYAL ARMY, DO YOU?
AND WITHOUT GIVING BHALO A CHANCE TO DEFEND HIMSELF, HE KILLED THE BRAVE ODE.
WHEN THEY SAW BHALO BHAND FALL, THE ODES LOST THEIR MORALE. BUT NAYAK DALO DHAND DID NOT PERMIT THEM TO RETREAT.
DON'T GIVE UP, MY MEN. RUPA'S MURDER MUST BE AVENGED.

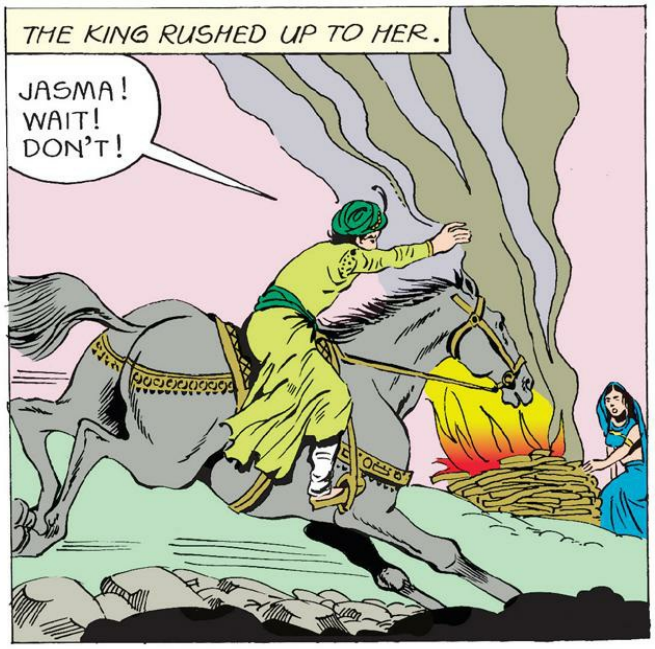

WHEN THE COMMANDER HEARD DALO, HE CHARGED UP TO HIM.
SURRENDER OR DIE!
SURRENDER IS DEATH — FOR AN ODE!
THE COMMANDER RAISED HIS SWORD...
...AND BROUGHT IT DOWN ON THE NAYAK'S NECK.
AN ODE RAN TO JASMA.
YOUR FATHER IS DEAD. RUN AWAY FROM HERE.

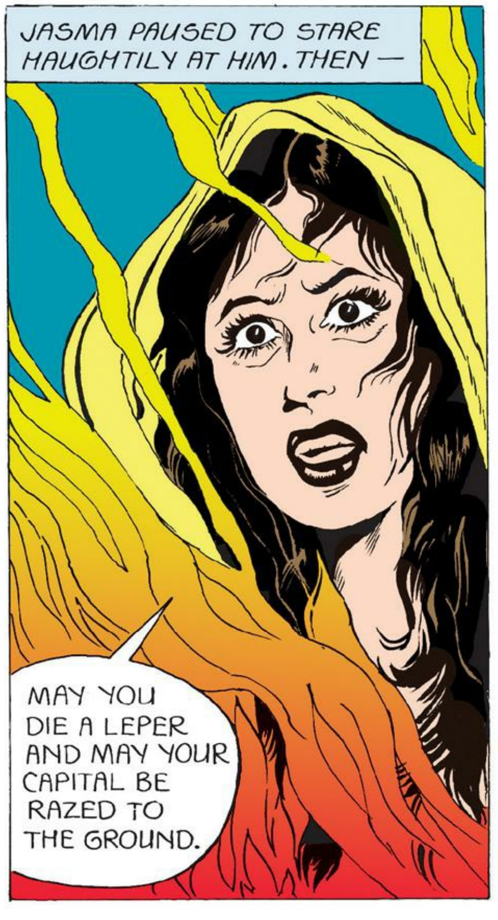

JASMA REFUSED TO EVEN MOVE.
I AM AN ODE. AN ODE NEVER RUNS AWAY! I WILL JOIN MY HUSBAND.

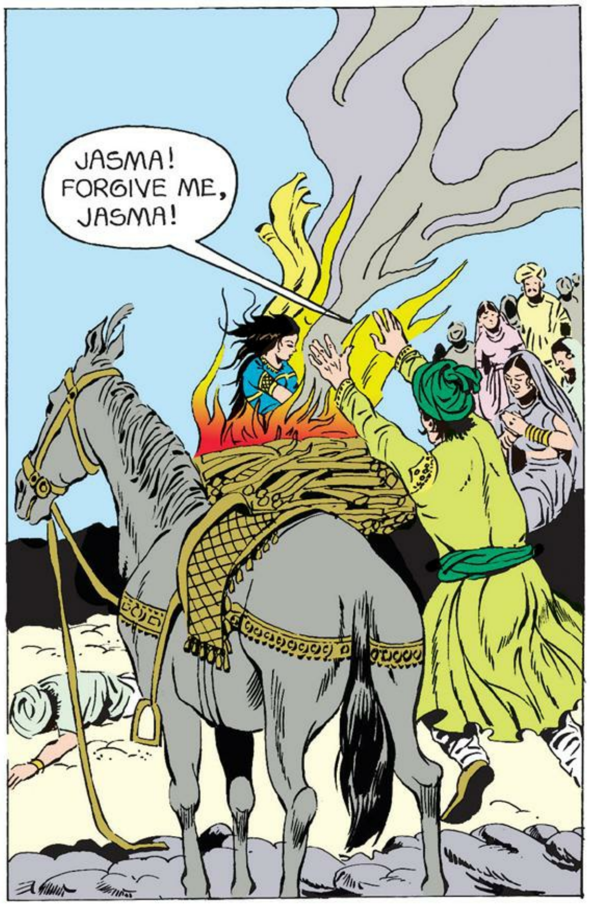

A CRY WENT UP FROM ALL THE WOMEN AROUND HER.
SATI JASMA!
SATI JASMA! MAY THE GODS BLESS HER!

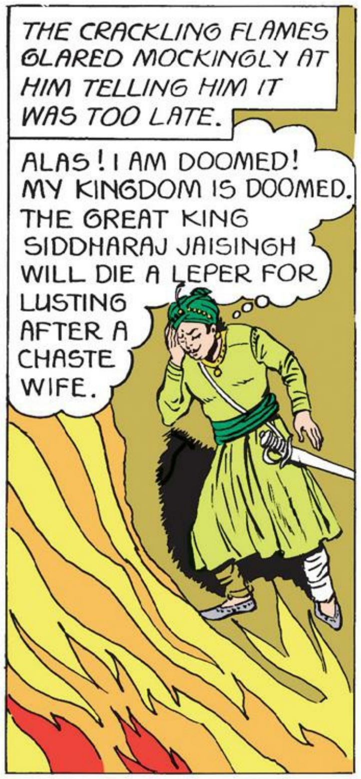

JUST THEN THE KING RODE UP TO THE SITE. SHOCKED BY WHAT HE SAW, HE TURNED FURIOUSLY UPON THE CHIEF OF THE GUARDS.
WHY DID YOU KILL THESE INNOCENT TRIBALS? I ONLY ORDERED YOU TO CAPTURE THEM ALIVE.
THERE WAS NO OTHER ALTERNATIVE, YOUR MAJESTY. THEY PREFERRED DEATH TO CAPTIVITY.

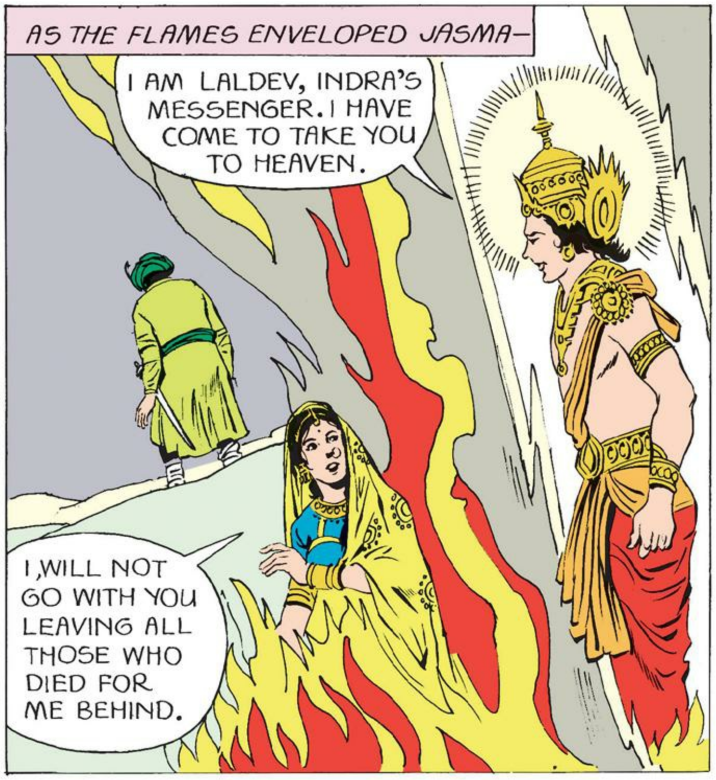

WHERE IS JASMA?
THERE, YOUR MAJESTY— ABOUT TO JUMP INTO THE FUNERAL PYRE.

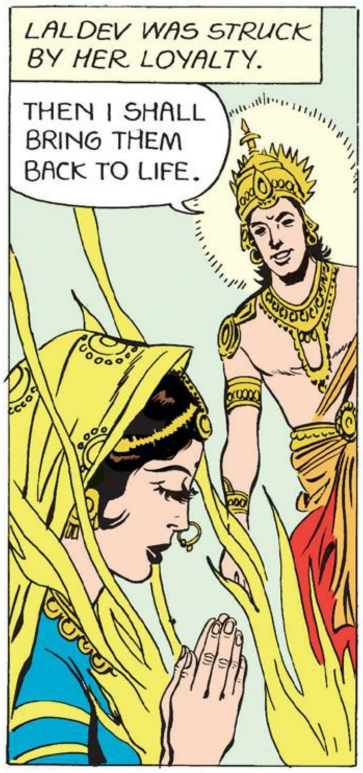

THE KING RUSHED UP TO HER.
JASMA! WAIT! DON'T!

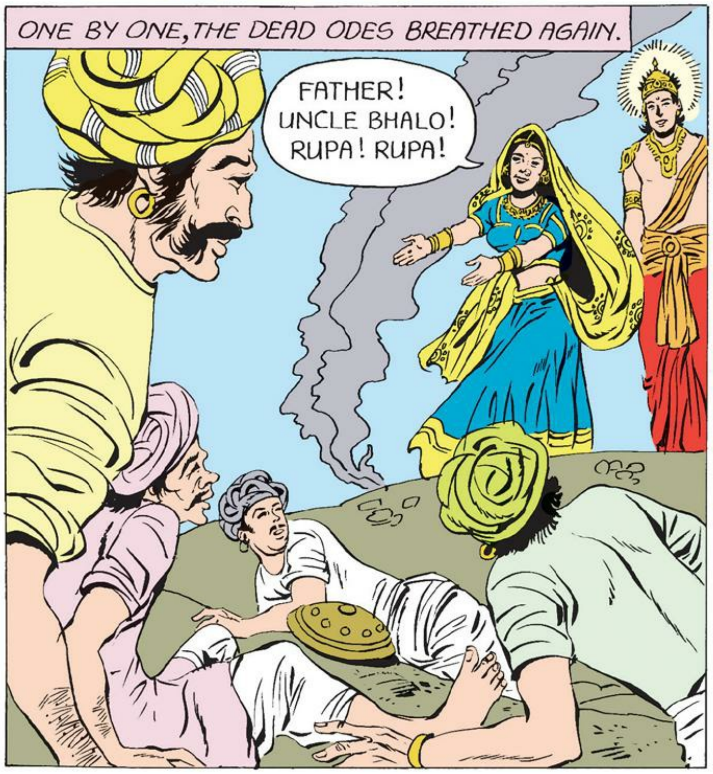

JASMA PAUSED TO STARE HAUGHTILY AT HIM. THEN —
MAY YOU DIE A LEPER AND MAY YOUR CAPITAL BE RAZED TO THE GROUND.

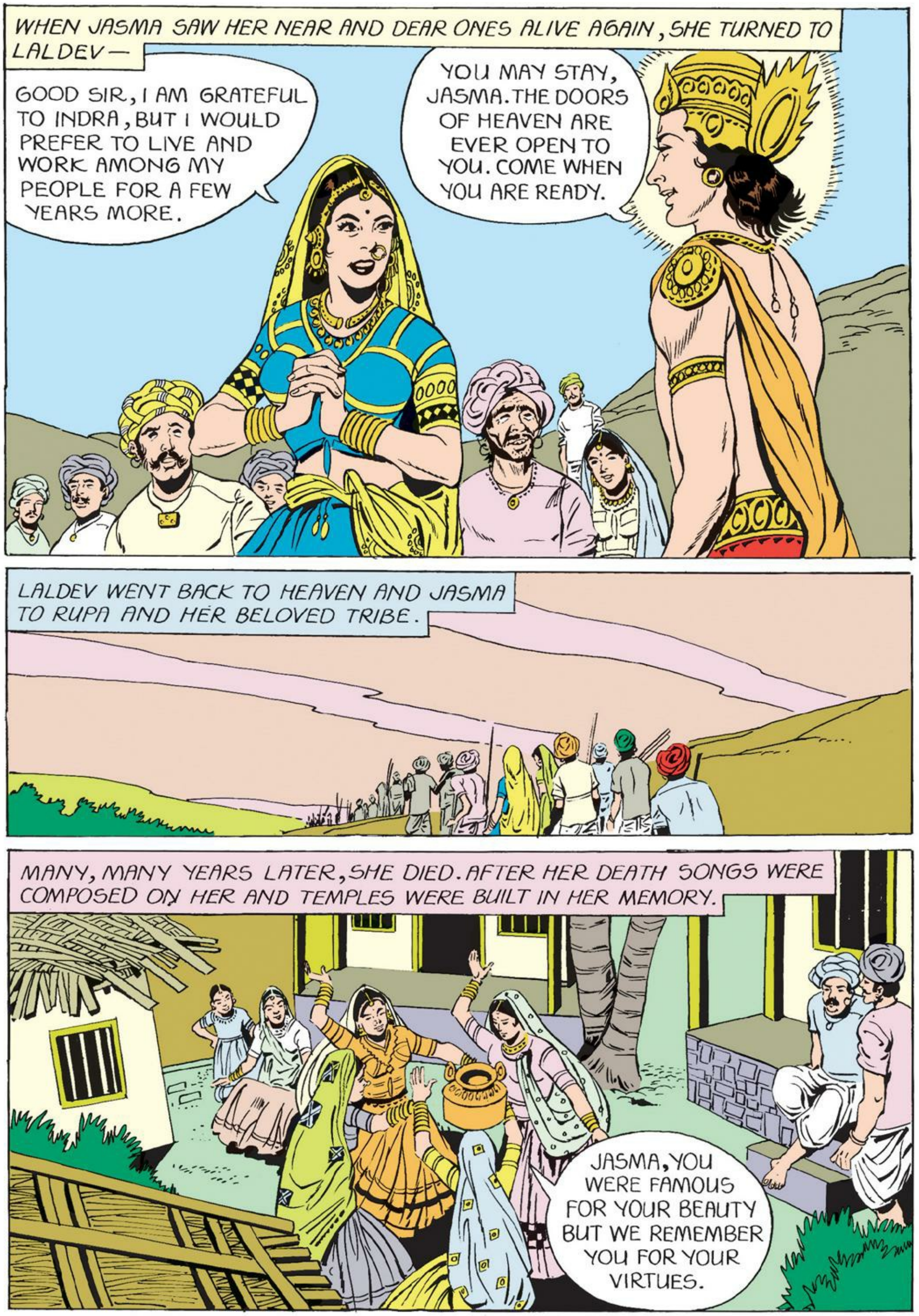

JASMA! FORGIVE ME, JASMA!


THE CRACKLING FLAMES GLARED MOCKINGLY AT HIM TELLING HIM IT WAS TOO LATE.
ALAS! I AM DOOMED! MY KINGDOM IS DOOMED. THE GREAT KING SIDDHARAJ JAISINGH WILL DIE A LEPER FOR LUSTING AFTER A CHASTE WIFE.


AS THE FLAMES ENVELOPED JASMA—
I AM LALDEV, INDRA'S MESSENGER. I HAVE COME TO TAKE YOU TO HEAVEN.
I,WILL NOT GO WITH YOU LEAVING ALL THOSE WHO DIED FOR ME BEHIND.


LALDEV WAS STRUCK BY HER LOYALTY.
THEN I SHALL BRING THEM BACK TO LIFE.


ONE BY ONE, THE DEAD ODES BREATHED AGAIN.
FATHER! UNCLE BHALO! RUPA! RUPA!


WHEN JASMA SAW HER NEAR AND DEAR ONES ALIVE AGAIN, SHE TURNED TO LALDEV—
GOOD SIR, I AM GRATEFUL TO INDRA, BUT I WOULD PREFER TO LIVE AND WORK AMONG MY PEOPLE FOR A FEW YEARS MORE.
YOU MAY STAY, JASMA. THE DOORS OF HEAVEN ARE EVER OPEN TO YOU. COME WHEN YOU ARE READY.
LALDEV WENT BACK TO HEAVEN AND JASMA TO RUPA AND HER BELOVED TRIBE.
MANY, MANY YEARS LATER, SHE DIED. AFTER HER DEATH SONGS WERE COMPOSED ON HER AND TEMPLES WERE BUILT IN HER MEMORY.
JASMA, YOU WERE FAMOUS FOR YOUR BEAUTY BUT WE REMEMBER YOU FOR YOUR VIRTUES.

CELEBRATING 50 YEARS

AMAR CHITRA KATHA

It was in 1967 that the first Amar Chitra Katha comic rolled off the presses, changing story-telling for children across India forever.

Five decades and more than 400 books later, we are still sharing stories from India's rich heritage, primarily because of the love and support shown by readers like yourself.

SO, FROM US TO YOU, HERE'S A BIG

THANK YOU!

THE BRIDEGROOM'S RING

TWO TALES FROM GARHWAL

AMAR CHITRA KATHA

The route to your roots

THE BRIDEGROOM'S RING

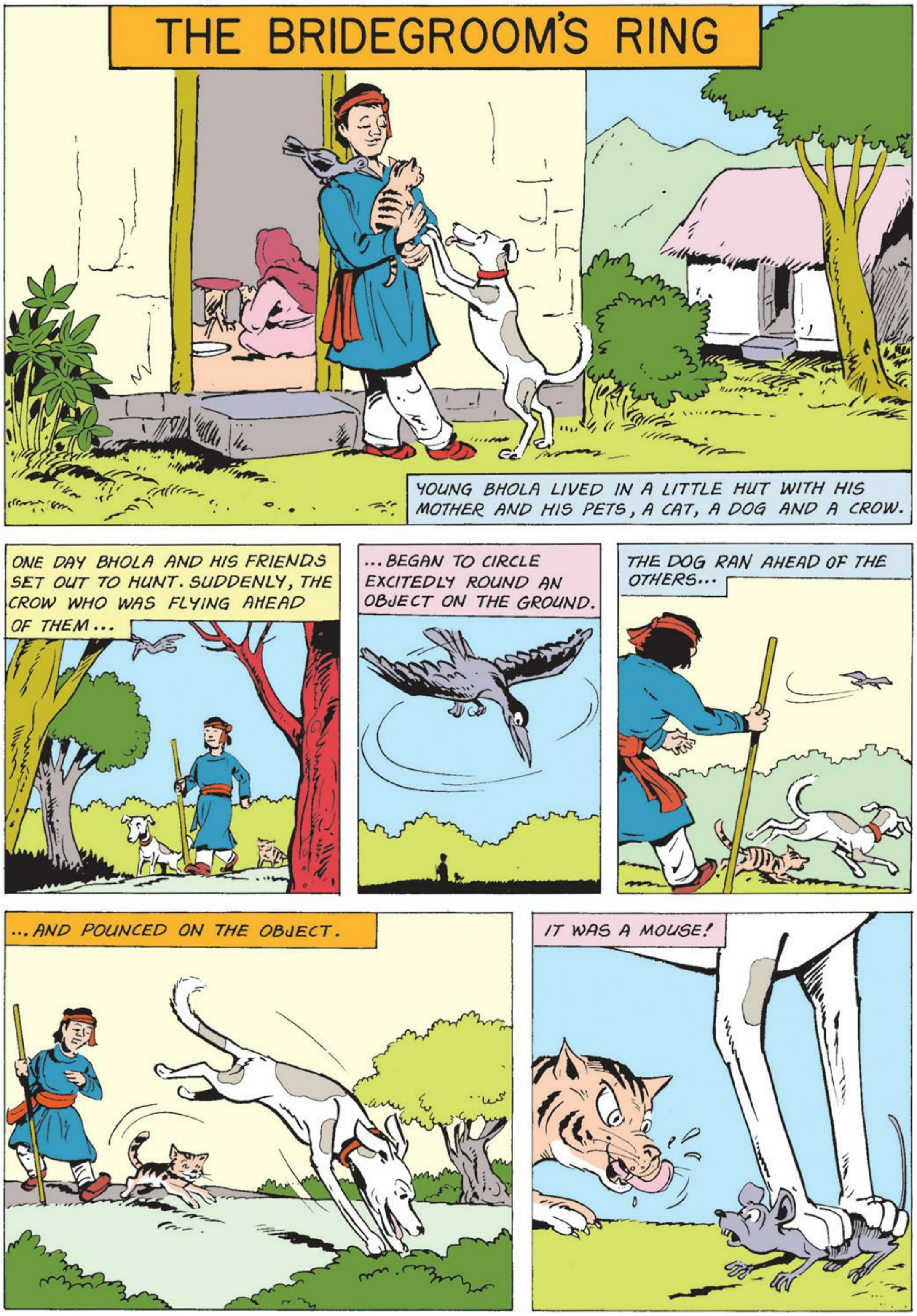
When Bhola rescues a mouse from his cat his fortunes change dramatically. The mouse is an expert treasure hunter and fills Bhola's house with gold coins. Now comfortably off, Bhola's mother decides that her son should get married. Everything goes well, until someone steals the wedding ring.

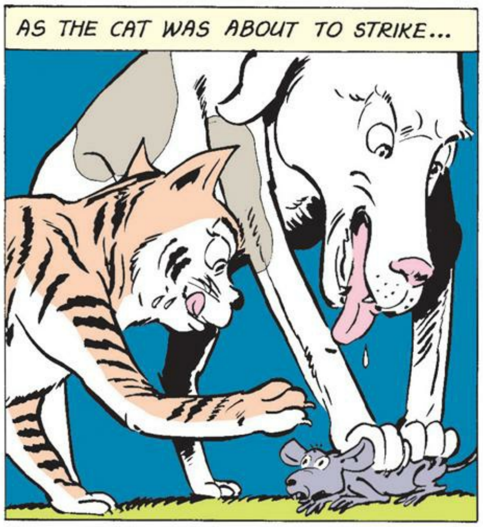
When a man-eating demon catches a kayastha, they make a deal: the kayastha cooks, the demon does not eat him. After some time the kayastha wants to go home to his own people. The grateful demon gives him some strands of hair and tells him to burn them if he ever needs help.

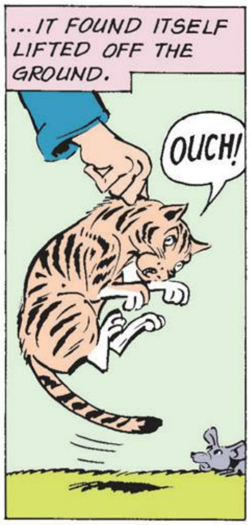
Passed on for generations, these two tales from Garhwal, combine humour and adventure.

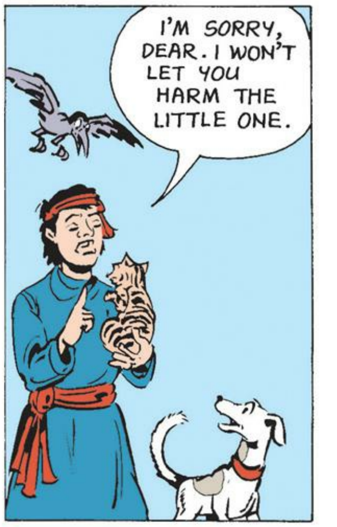
Script	**Illustrations**	**Editor**
Appaswami	Ashok Dongre	Anant Pai

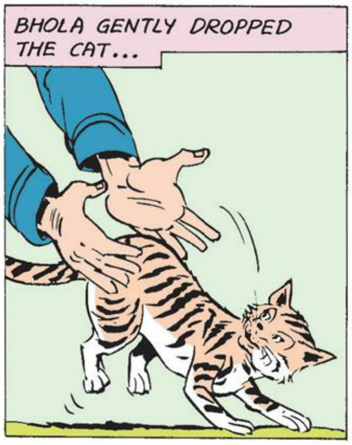
THE BRIDEGROOM'S RING

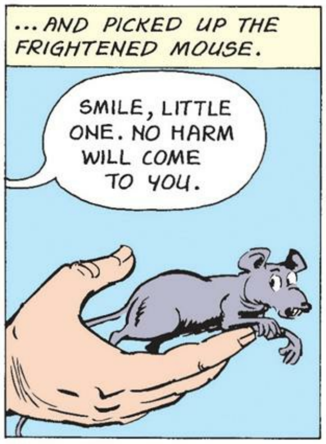

YOUNG BHOLA LIVED IN A LITTLE HUT WITH HIS MOTHER AND HIS PETS, A CAT, A DOG AND A CROW.
ONE DAY BHOLA AND HIS FRIENDS SET OUT TO HUNT. SUDDENLY, THE CROW WHO WAS FLYING AHEAD OF THEM...
...BEGAN TO CIRCLE EXCITEDLY ROUND AN OBJECT ON THE GROUND.
THE DOG RAN AHEAD OF THE OTHERS...
...AND POUNCED ON THE OBJECT.
IT WAS A MOUSE!

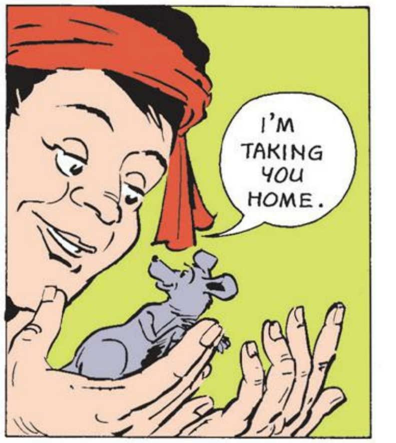

AS THE CAT WAS ABOUT TO STRIKE...

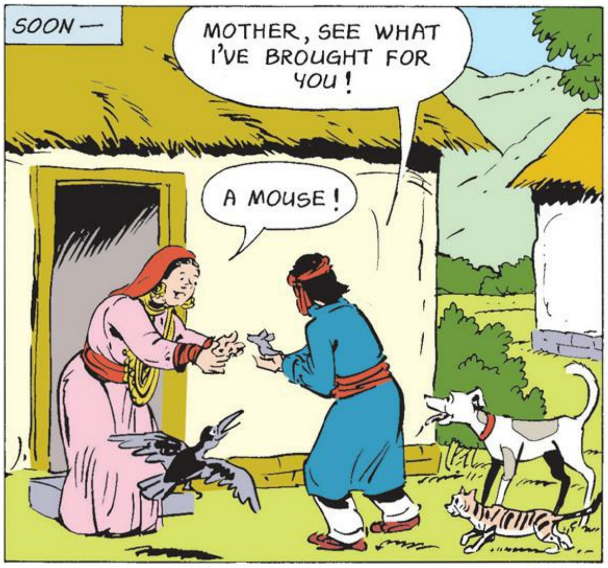

...IT FOUND ITSELF LIFTED OFF THE GROUND.
OUCH!

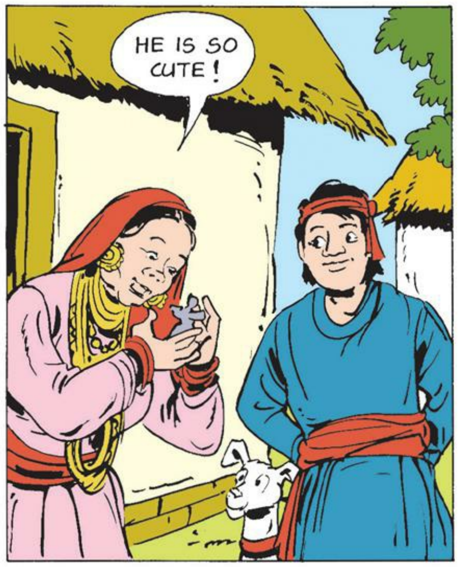

I'M SORRY, DEAR. I WON'T LET YOU HARM THE LITTLE ONE.

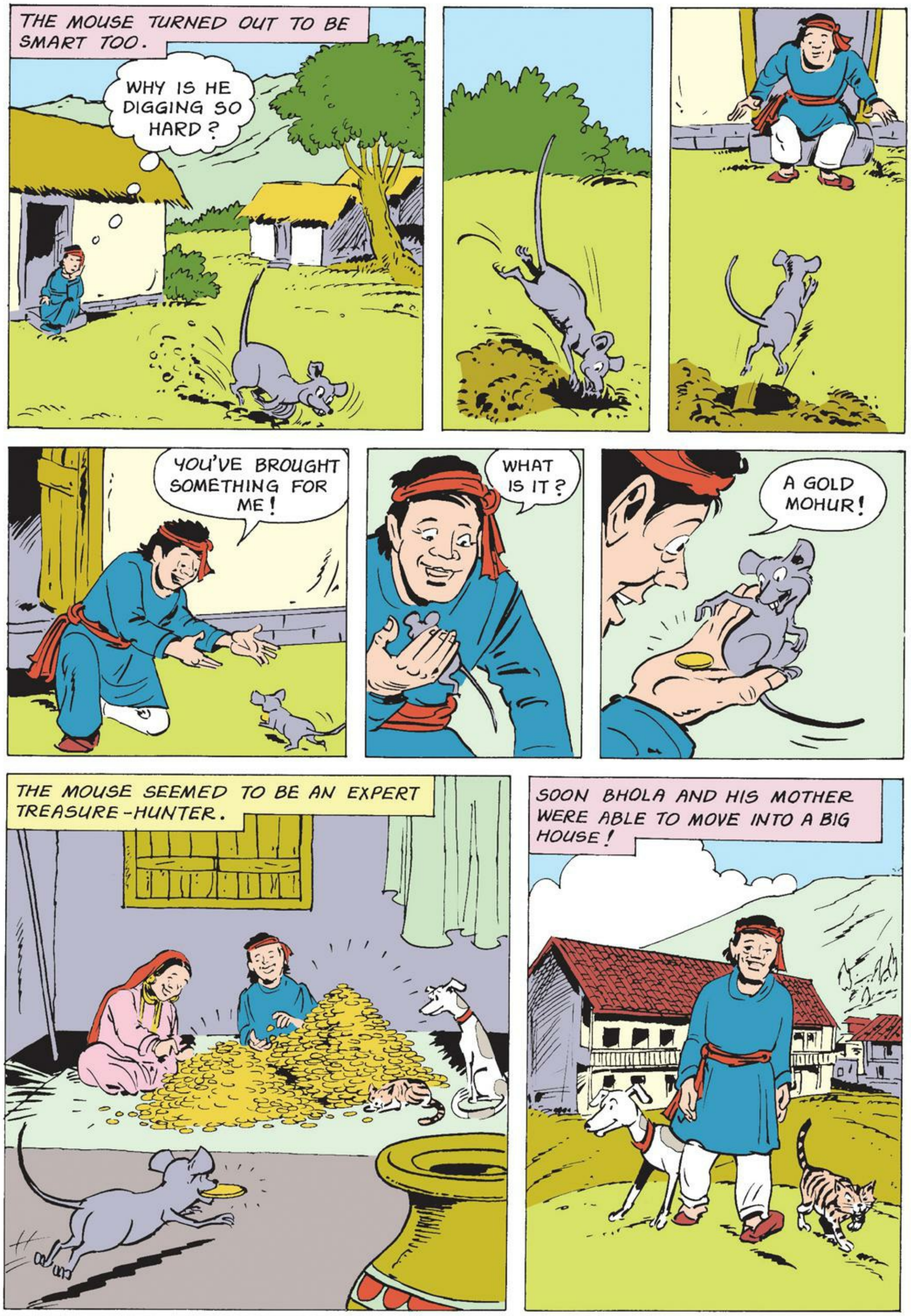

BHOLA GENTLY DROPPED THE CAT...

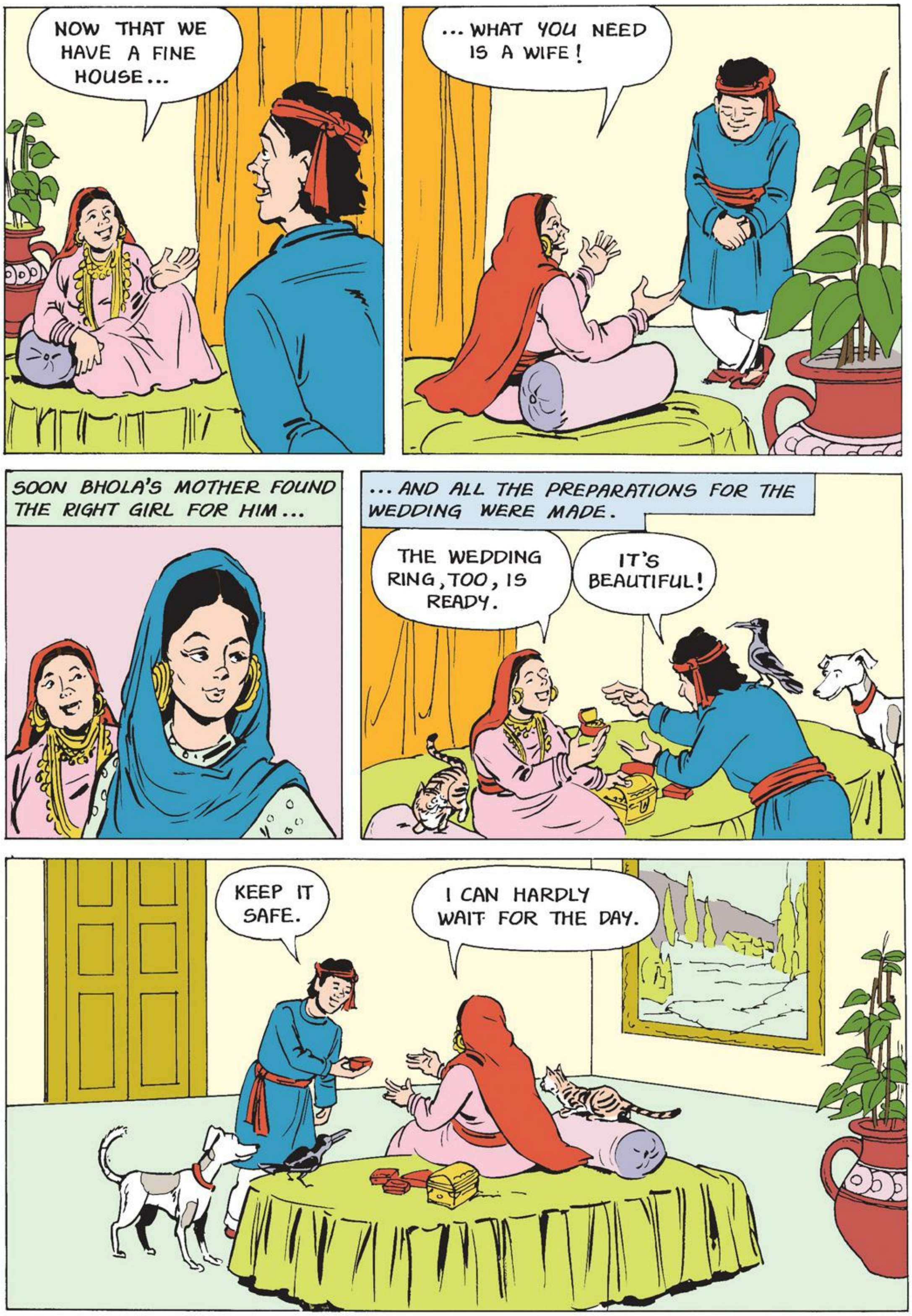

...AND PICKED UP THE FRIGHTENED MOUSE.
SMILE, LITTLE ONE. NO HARM WILL COME TO YOU.

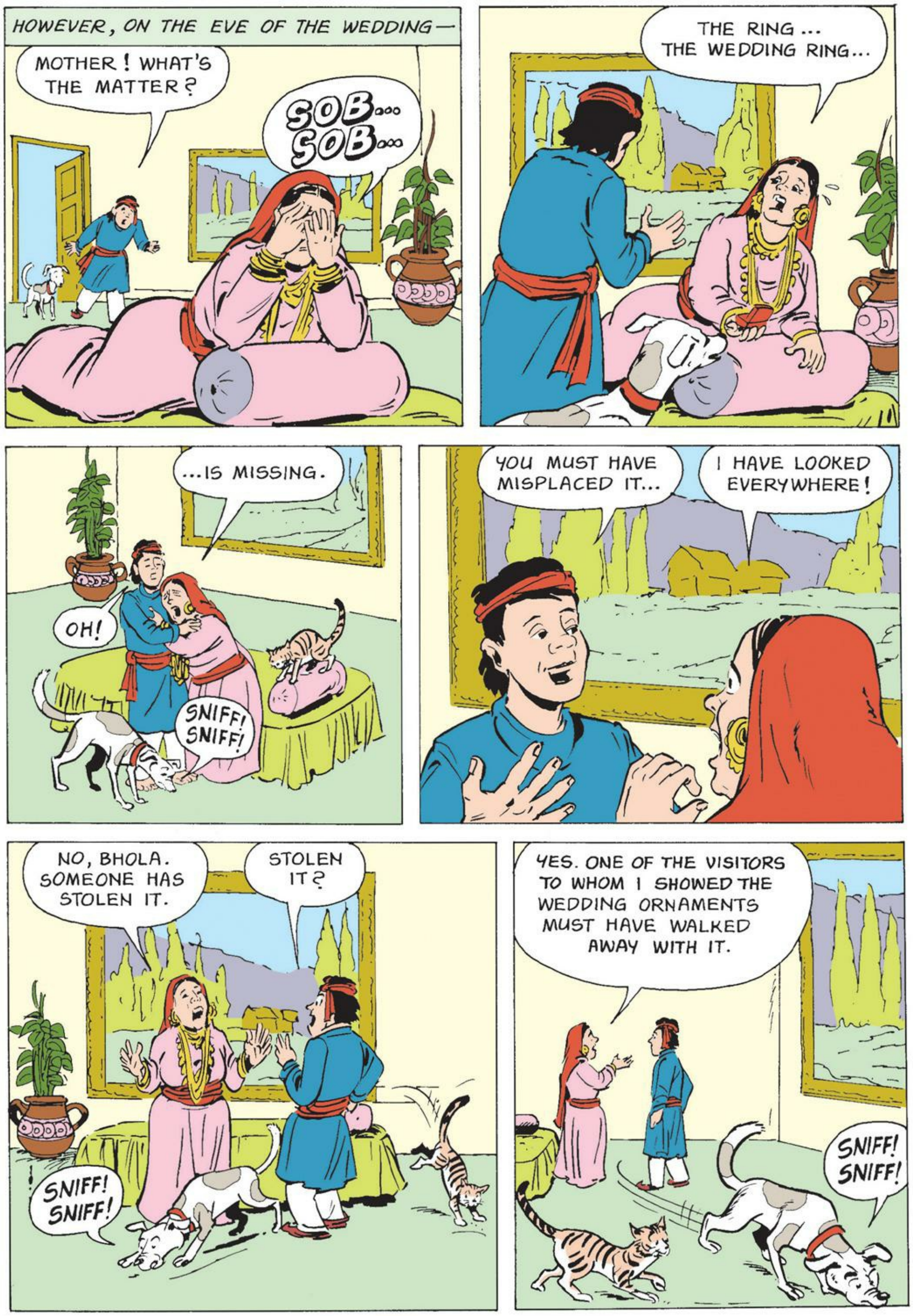

I'M TAKING YOU HOME.

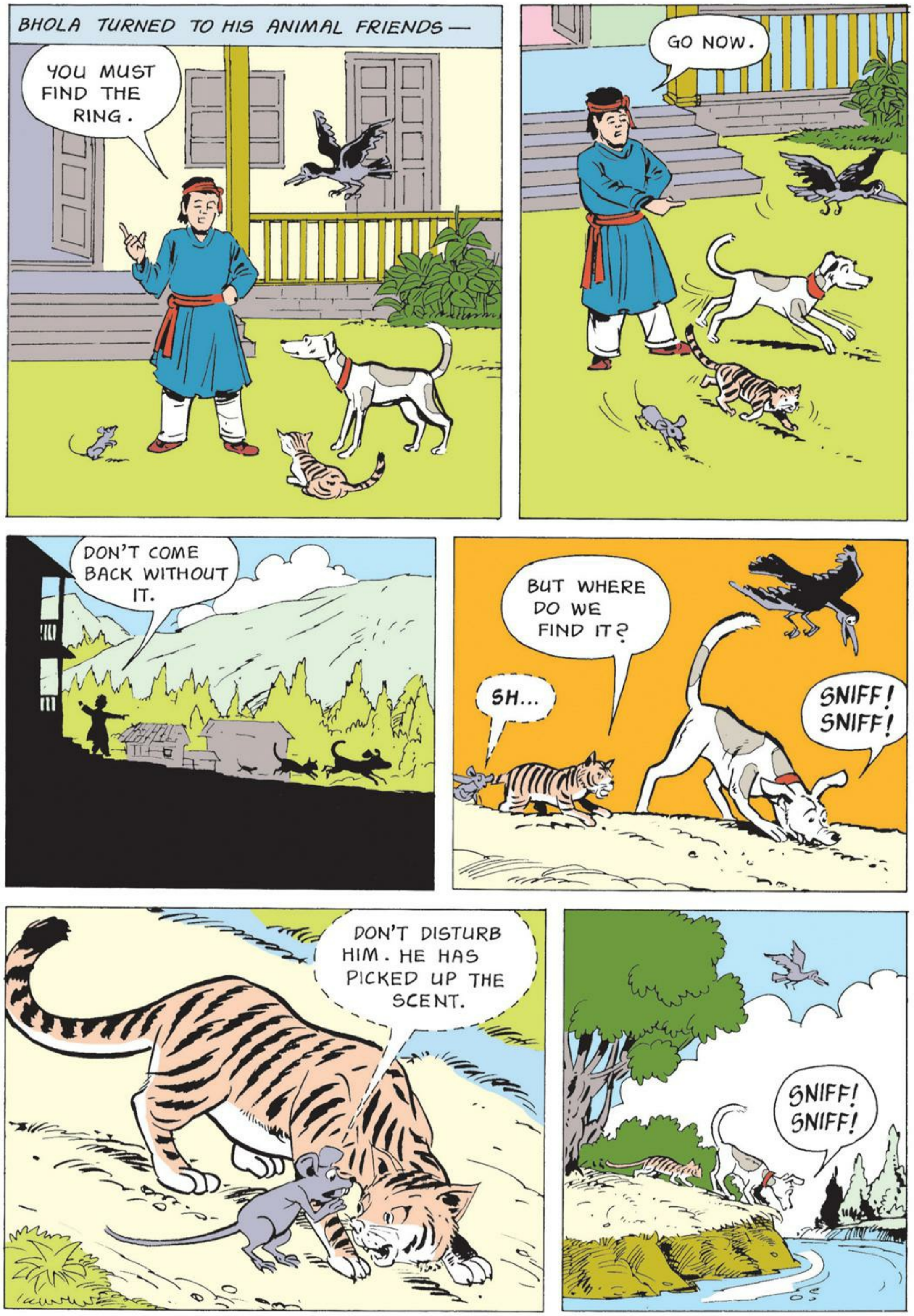

SOON—
MOTHER, SEE WHAT I'VE BROUGHT FOR YOU!
A MOUSE!

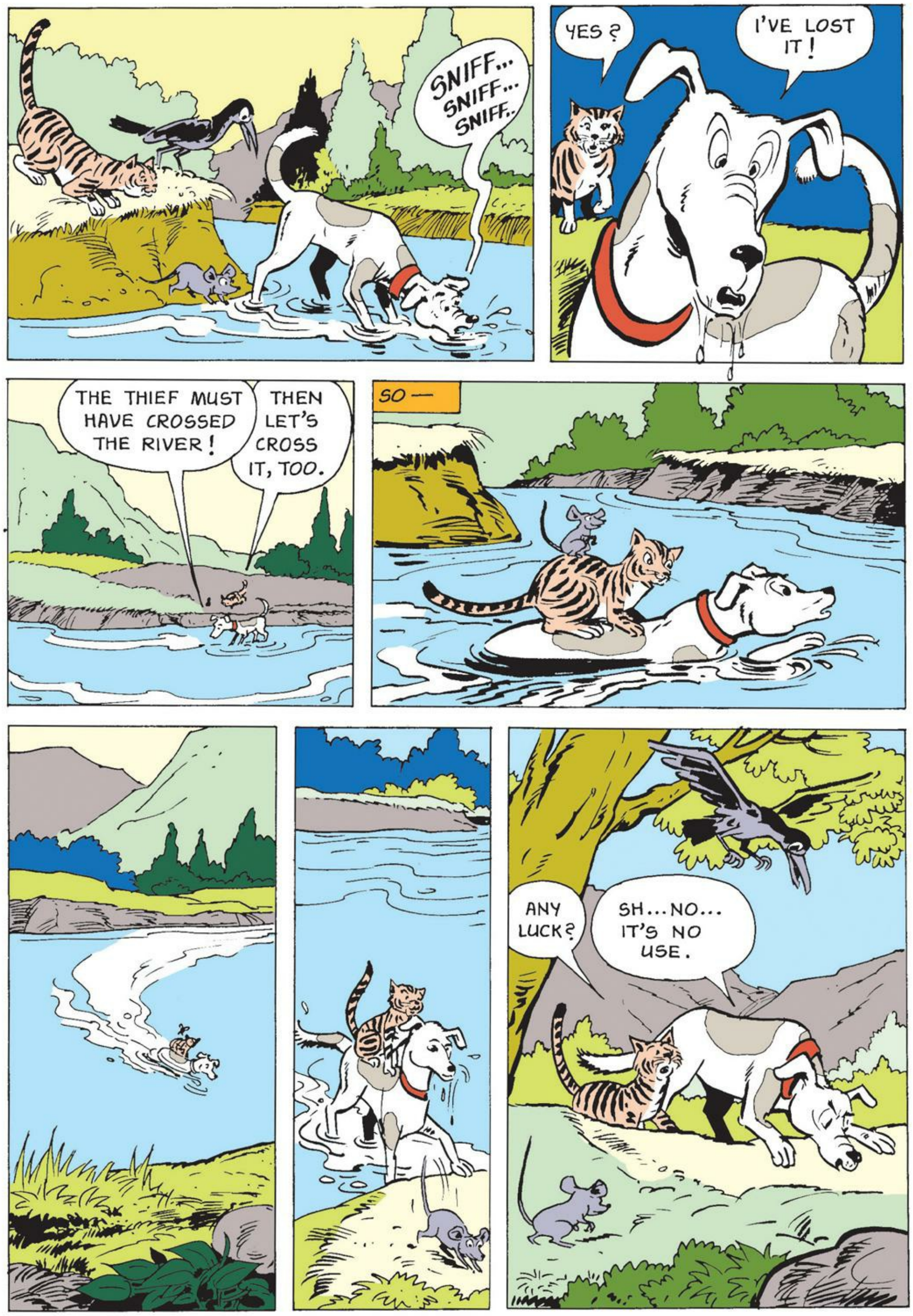

HE IS SO CUTE!

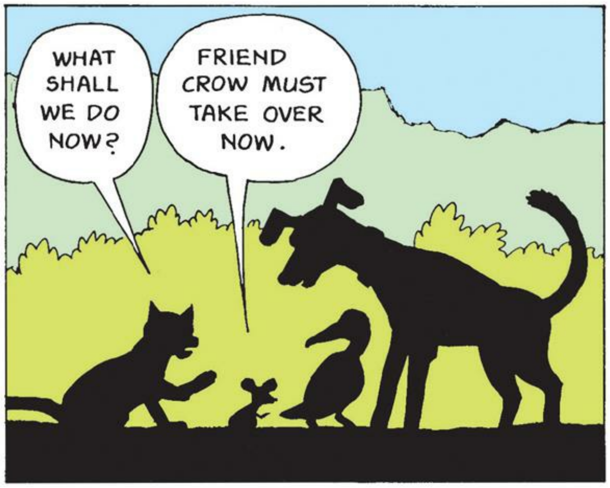

THE MOUSE TURNED OUT TO BE SMART TOO.
WHY IS HE DIGGING SO HARD?
YOU'VE BROUGHT SOMETHING FOR ME!
WHAT IS IT?
A GOLD MOHUR!
THE MOUSE SEEMED TO BE AN EXPERT TREASURE-HUNTER.
SOON BHOLA AND HIS MOTHER WERE ABLE TO MOVE INTO A BIG HOUSE!

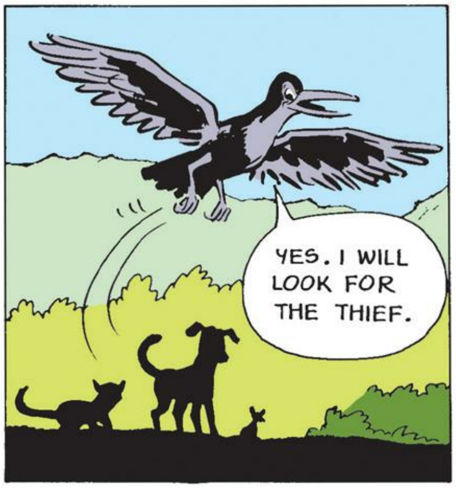

NOW THAT WE HAVE A FINE HOUSE...
... WHAT YOU NEED IS A WIFE!
SOON BHOLA'S MOTHER FOUND THE RIGHT GIRL FOR HIM...
... AND ALL THE PREPARATIONS FOR THE WEDDING WERE MADE.
THE WEDDING RING, TOO, IS READY.
IT'S BEAUTIFUL!
KEEP IT SAFE.
I CAN HARDLY WAIT FOR THE DAY.

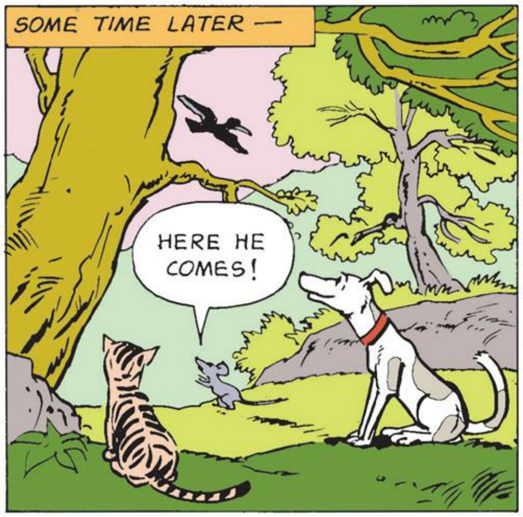

HOWEVER, ON THE EVE OF THE WEDDING—
MOTHER ! WHAT'S THE MATTER ?
SOB... SOB...
THE RING ... THE WEDDING RING...
...IS MISSING.
OH!
SNIFF! SNIFF!
YOU MUST HAVE MISPLACED IT...
I HAVE LOOKED EVERYWHERE!
NO, BHOLA. SOMEONE HAS STOLEN IT.
STOLEN IT ?
SNIFF! SNIFF!
YES. ONE OF THE VISITORS TO WHOM I SHOWED THE WEDDING ORNAMENTS MUST HAVE WALKED AWAY WITH IT.
SNIFF! SNIFF!

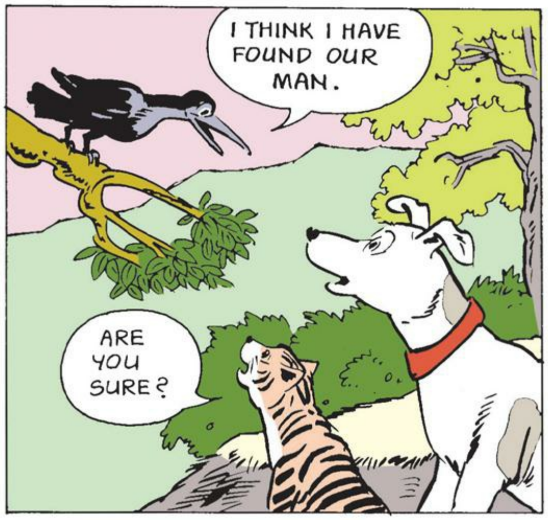

BHOLA TURNED TO HIS ANIMAL FRIENDS —
YOU MUST FIND THE RING.
GO NOW.
DON'T COME BACK WITHOUT IT.
BUT WHERE DO WE FIND IT?
SH...
SNIFF! SNIFF!
DON'T DISTURB HIM. HE HAS PICKED UP THE SCENT.
SNIFF! SNIFF!

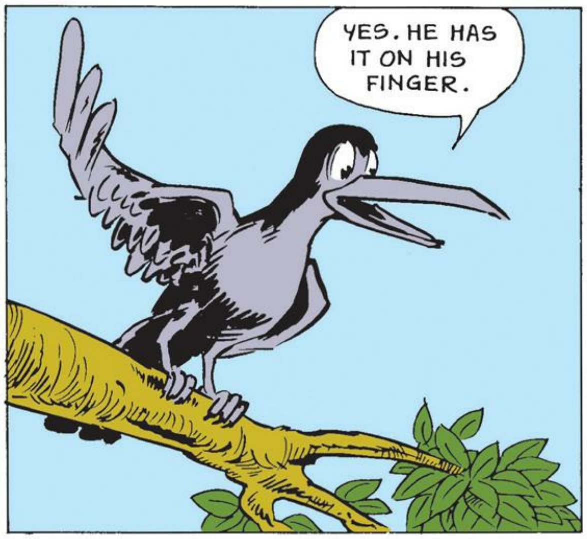

SNIFF... SNIFF... SNIFF..
YES ?
I'VE LOST IT !
THE THIEF MUST HAVE CROSSED THE RIVER !
THEN LET'S CROSS IT, TOO.
SO —
ANY LUCK ?
SH... NO... IT'S NO USE.

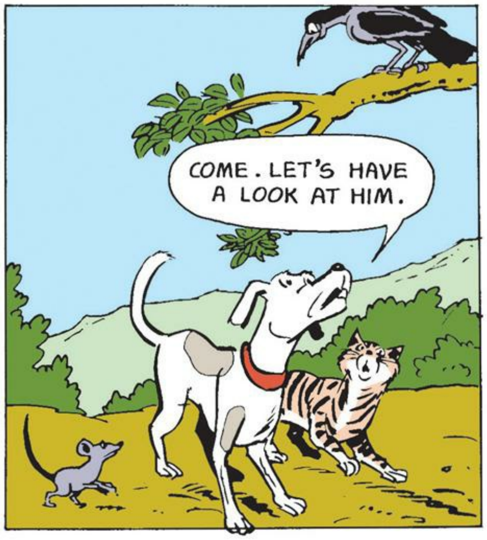

WHAT SHALL WE DO NOW?
FRIEND CROW MUST TAKE OVER NOW.

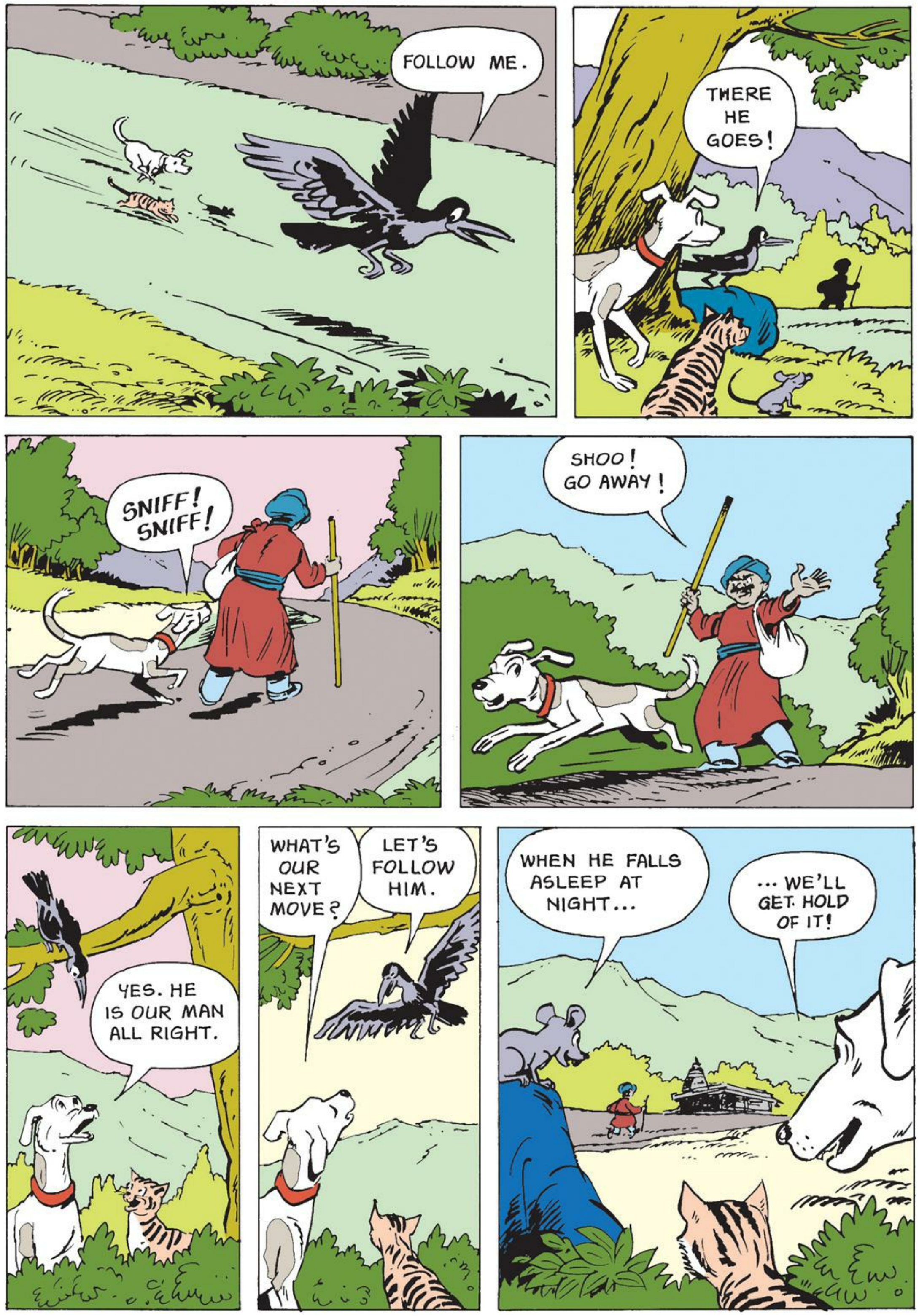

YES. I WILL LOOK FOR THE THIEF.

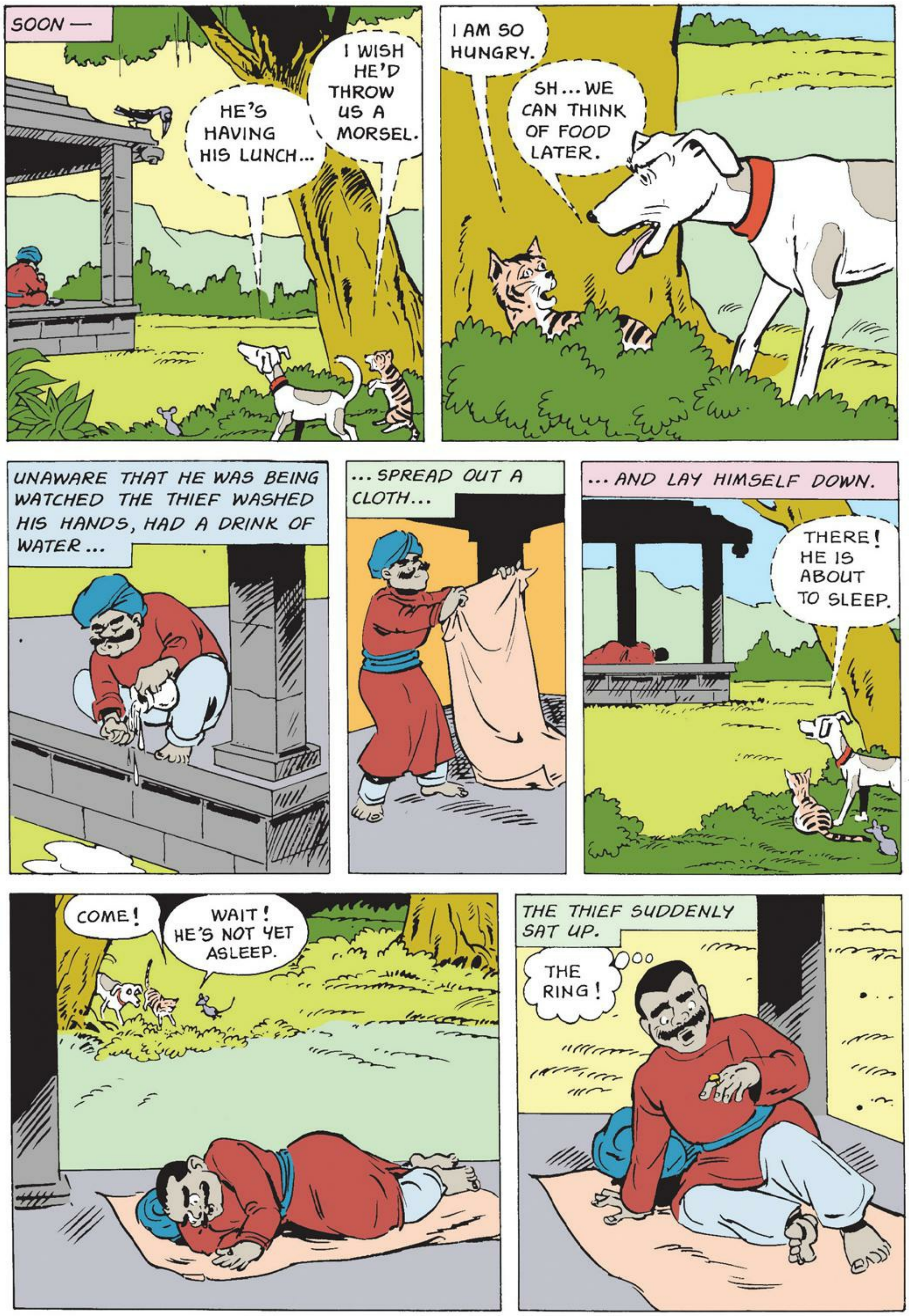

SOME TIME LATER —
HERE HE COMES!

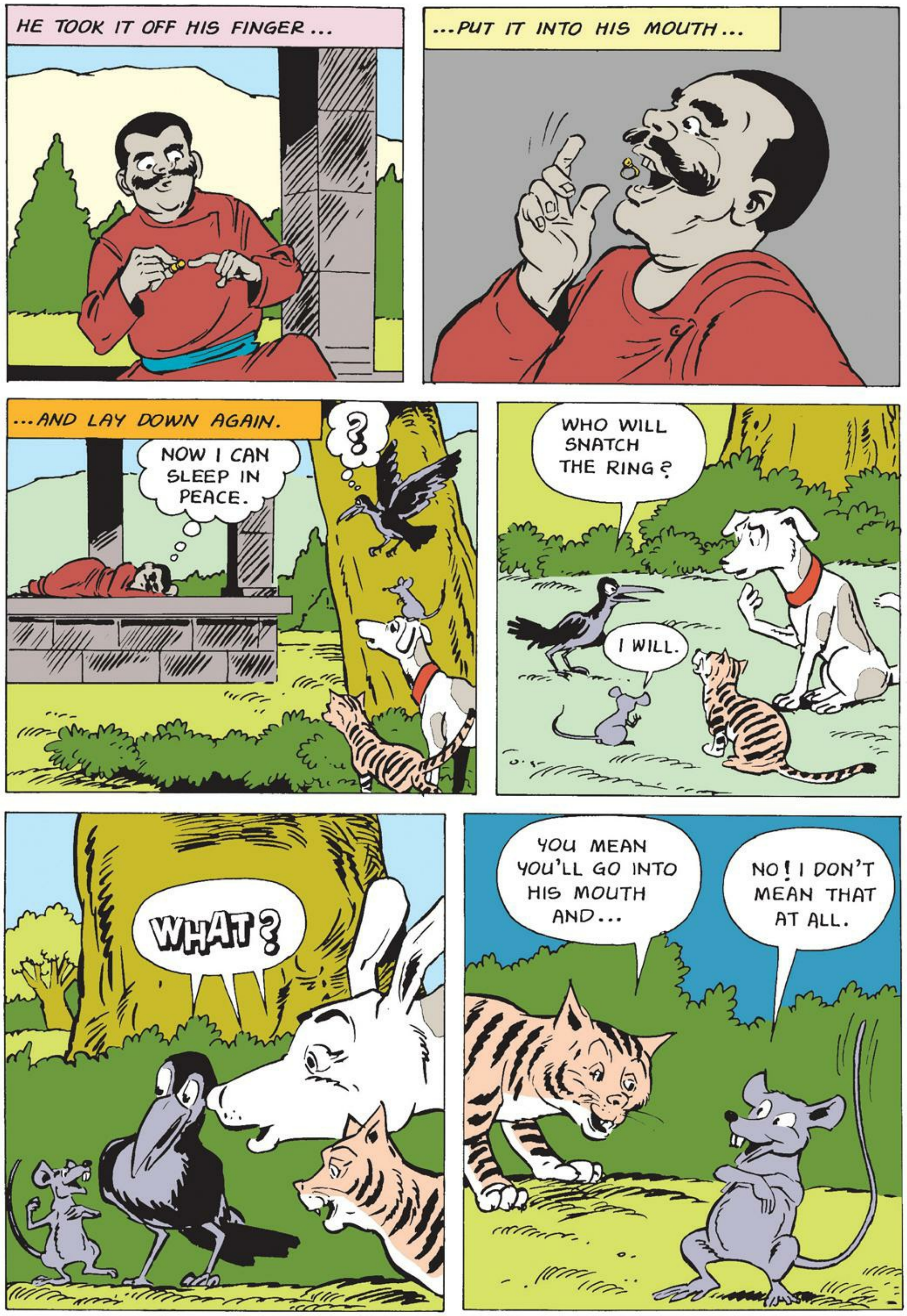

I THINK I HAVE FOUND OUR MAN.
ARE YOU SURE?

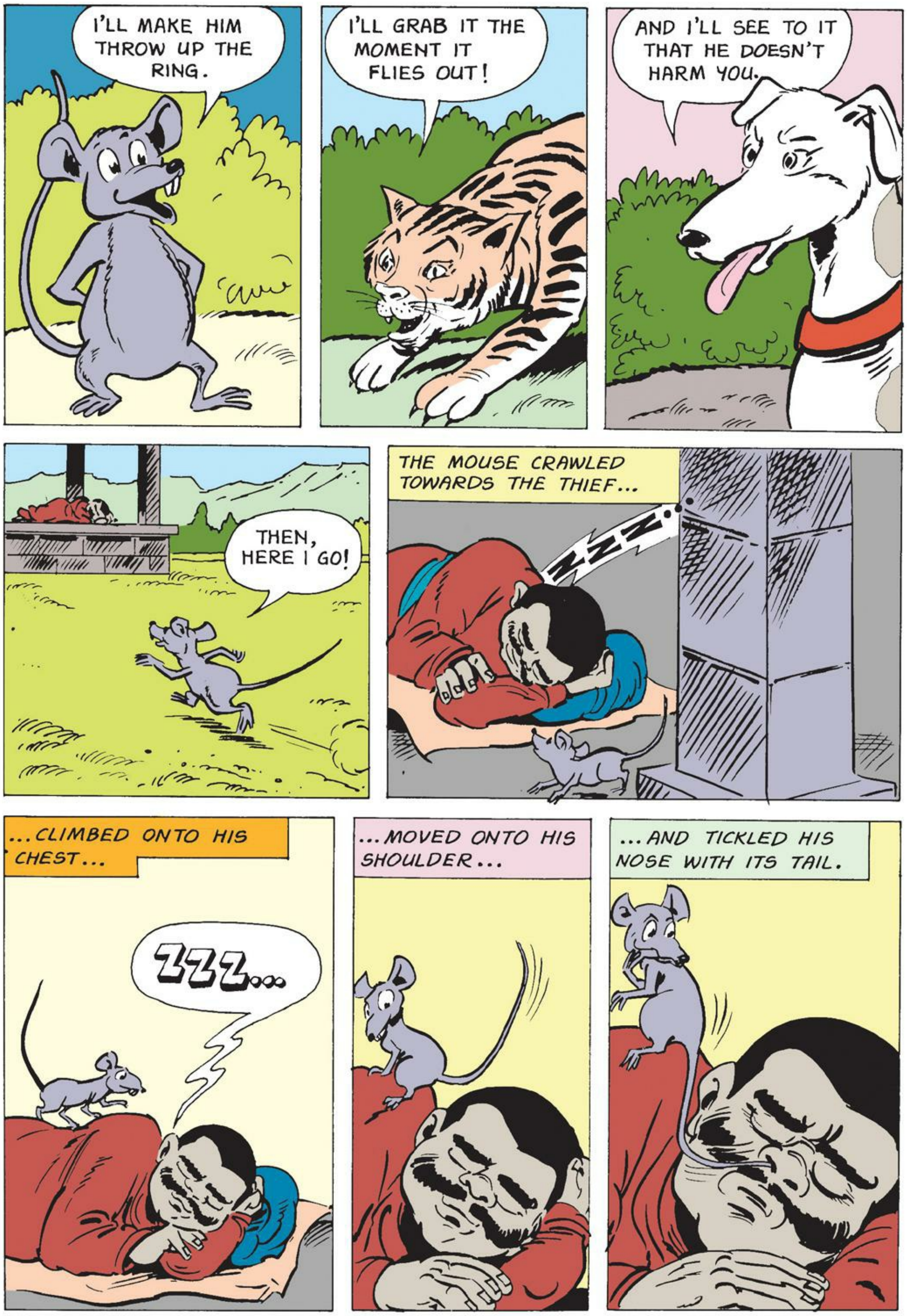

YES. HE HAS IT ON HIS FINGER.

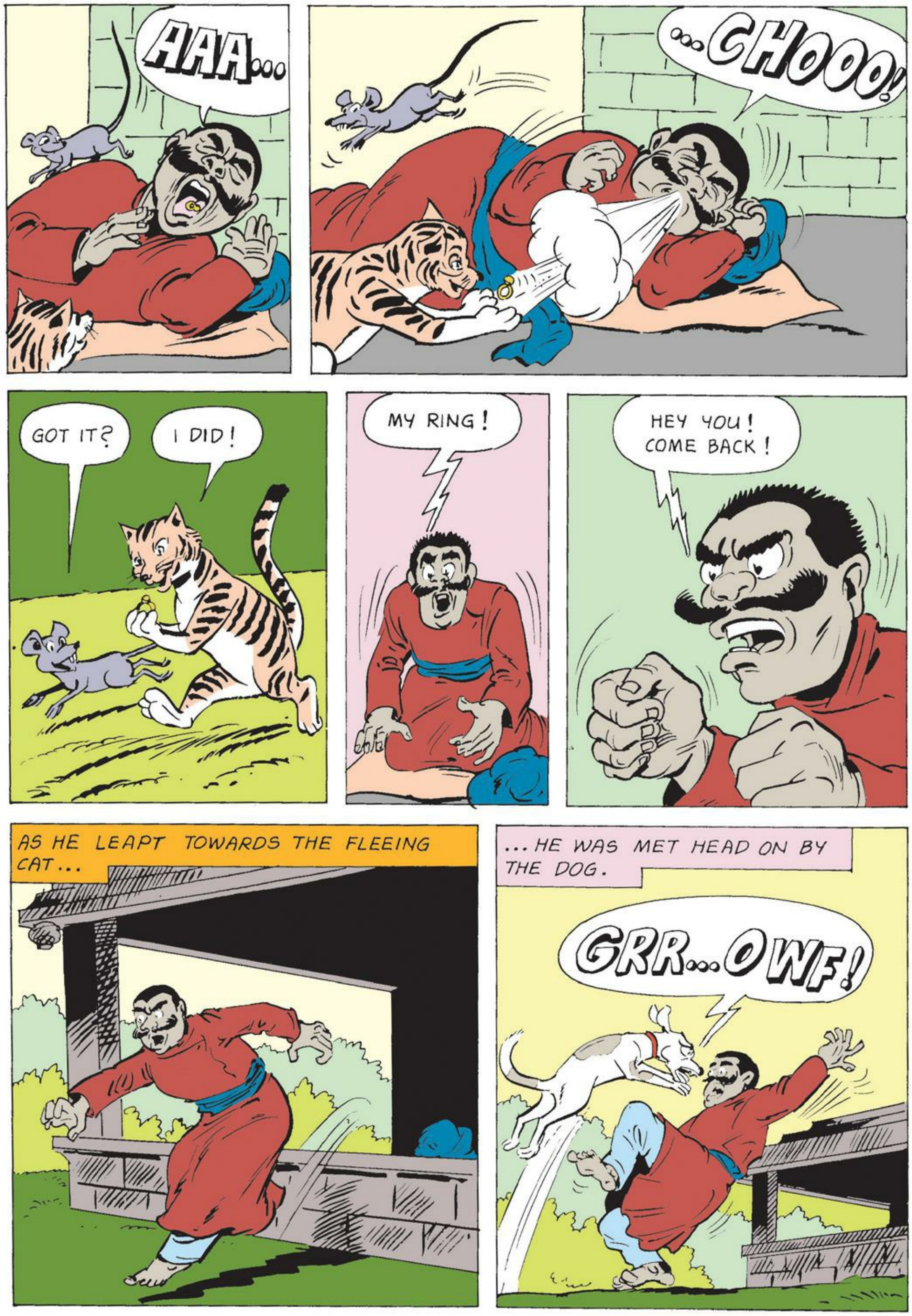

COME. LET'S HAVE A LOOK AT HIM.

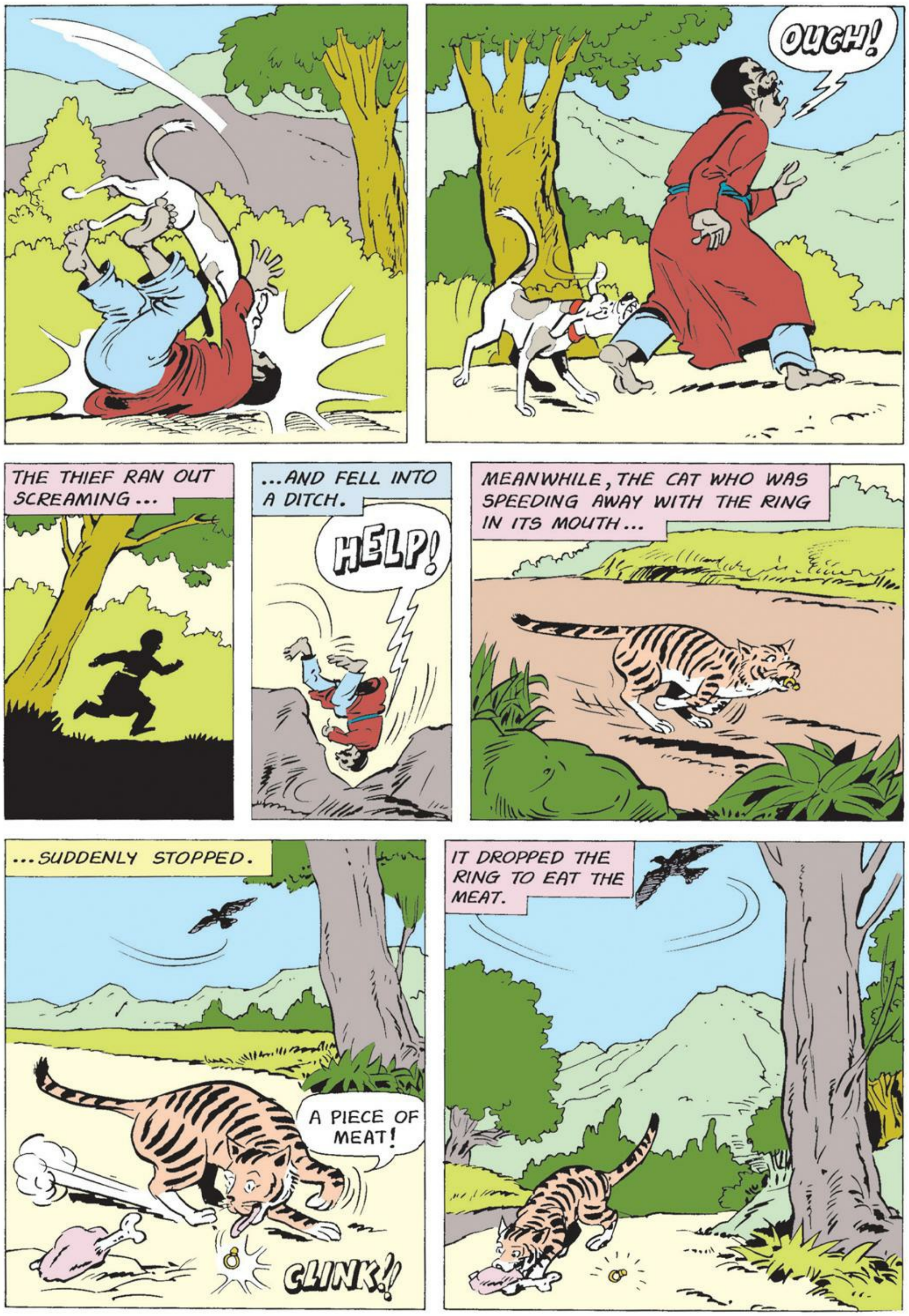

FOLLOW ME.
THERE HE GOES!
SNIFF! SNIFF!
SHOO! GO AWAY!
YES. HE IS OUR MAN ALL RIGHT.
WHAT'S OUR NEXT MOVE?
LET'S FOLLOW HIM.
WHEN HE FALLS ASLEEP AT NIGHT...
... WE'LL GET HOLD OF IT!


SOON —
HE'S HAVING HIS LUNCH...
I WISH HE'D THROW US A MORSEL.
I AM SO HUNGRY.
SH... WE CAN THINK OF FOOD LATER.
UNAWARE THAT HE WAS BEING WATCHED THE THIEF WASHED HIS HANDS, HAD A DRINK OF WATER...
... SPREAD OUT A CLOTH...
... AND LAY HIMSELF DOWN.
THERE! HE IS ABOUT TO SLEEP.
COME!
WAIT! HE'S NOT YET ASLEEP.
THE THIEF SUDDENLY SAT UP.
THE RING!

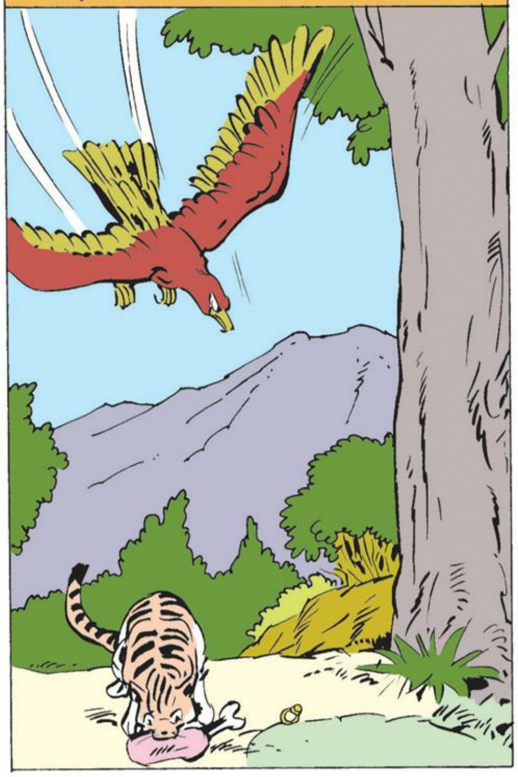

HE TOOK IT OFF HIS FINGER ...
... PUT IT INTO HIS MOUTH ...
... AND LAY DOWN AGAIN.
NOW I CAN SLEEP IN PEACE.
?
WHO WILL SNATCH THE RING ?
I WILL.
WHAT ?
YOU MEAN YOU'LL GO INTO HIS MOUTH AND ...
NO! I DON'T MEAN THAT AT ALL.


I'LL MAKE HIM THROW UP THE RING.
I'LL GRAB IT THE MOMENT IT FLIES OUT!
AND I'LL SEE TO IT THAT HE DOESN'T HARM YOU.
THEN, HERE I GO!
THE MOUSE CRAWLED TOWARDS THE THIEF...
ZZZ
...CLIMBED ONTO HIS CHEST...
ZZZ...
...MOVED ONTO HIS SHOULDER...
...AND TICKLED HIS NOSE WITH ITS TAIL.

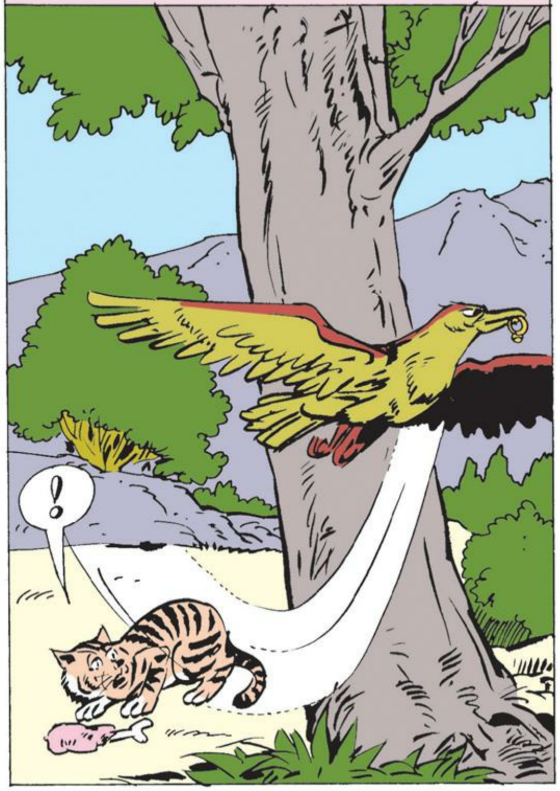

AAA...
...CHOOO!
GOT IT?
I DID!
MY RING!
HEY YOU! COME BACK!
AS HE LEAPT TOWARDS THE FLEEING CAT...
...HE WAS MET HEAD ON BY THE DOG.
GRR...OWF!

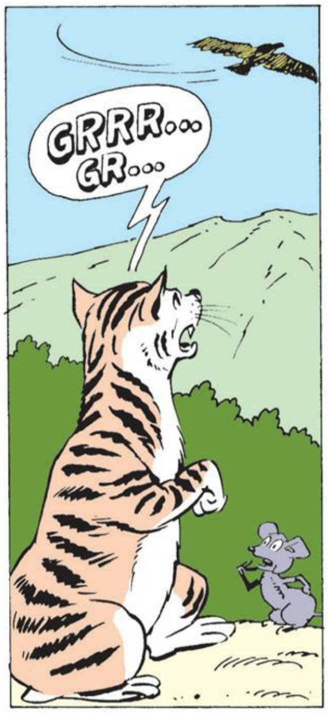

OUCH!
THE THIEF RAN OUT SCREAMING ...
...AND FELL INTO A DITCH.
HELP!
MEANWHILE, THE CAT WHO WAS SPEEDING AWAY WITH THE RING IN ITS MOUTH ...
... SUDDENLY STOPPED.
A PIECE OF MEAT!
CLINK!!
IT DROPPED THE RING TO EAT THE MEAT.

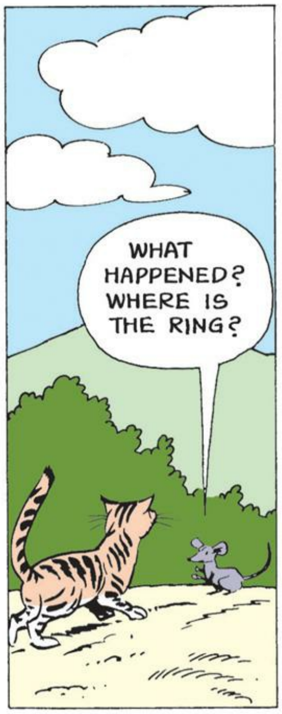
EVEN AS ITS TEETH SANK INTO THE MEAT, A HAWK SWOOPED DOWN...

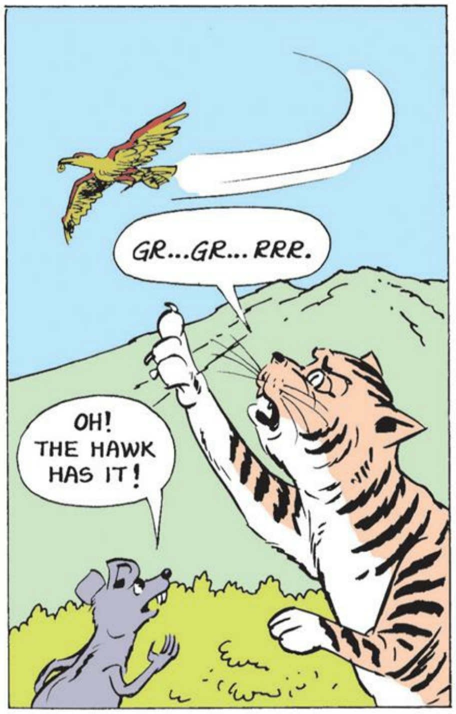


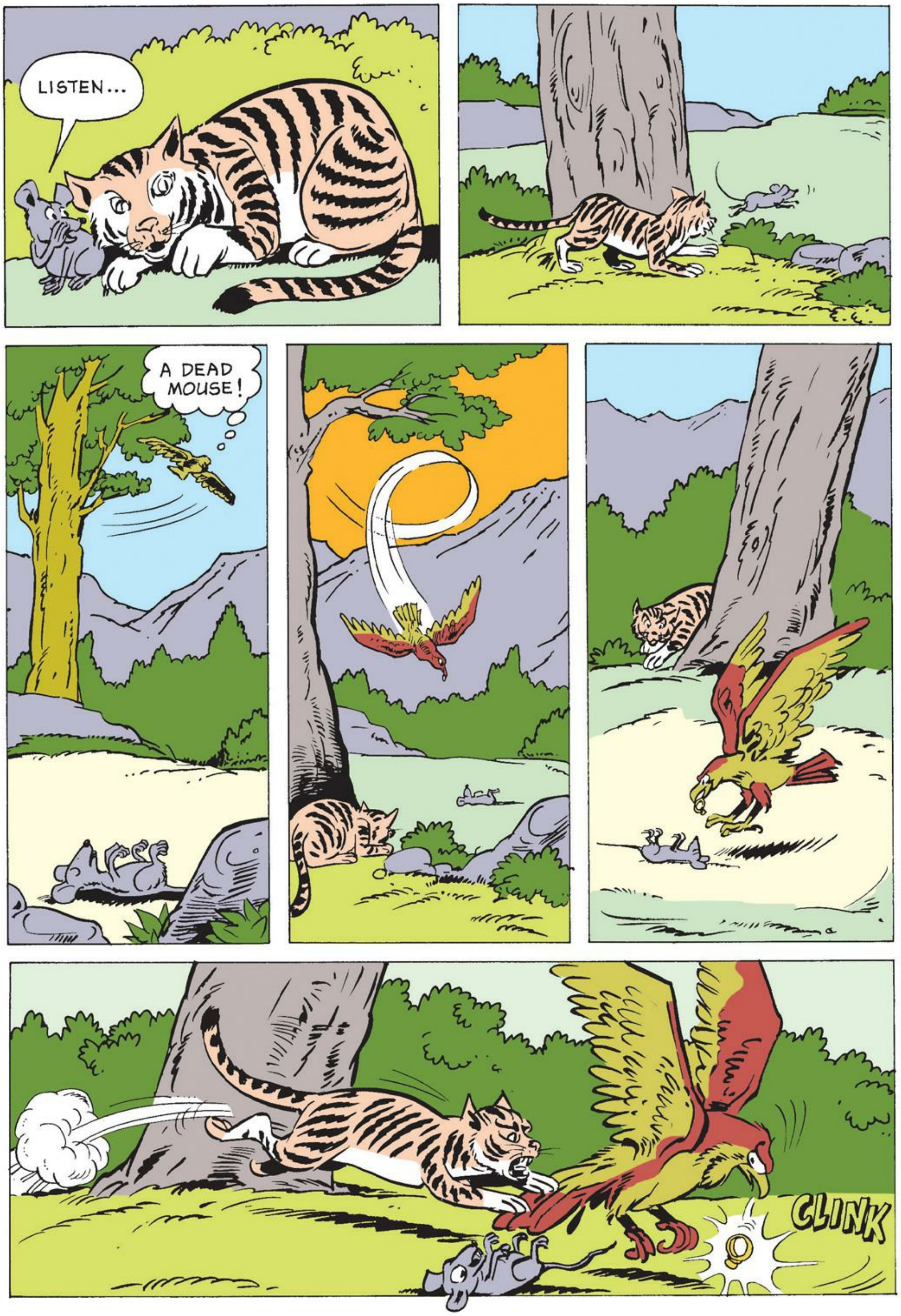
...AND FLEW AWAY WITH THE RING.

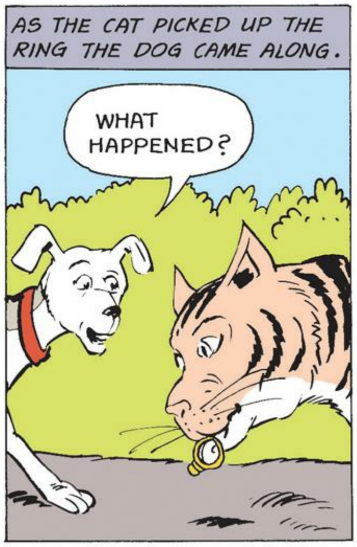


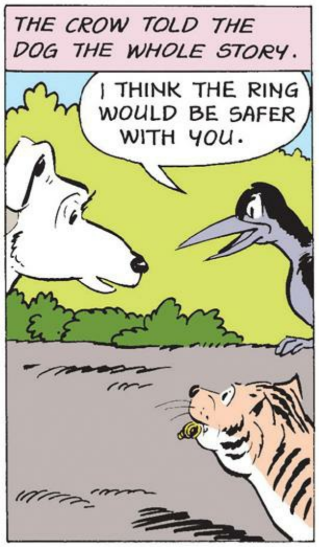


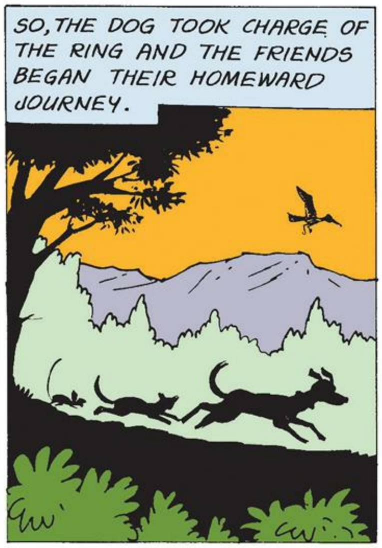

WHAT HAPPENED? WHERE IS THE RING?

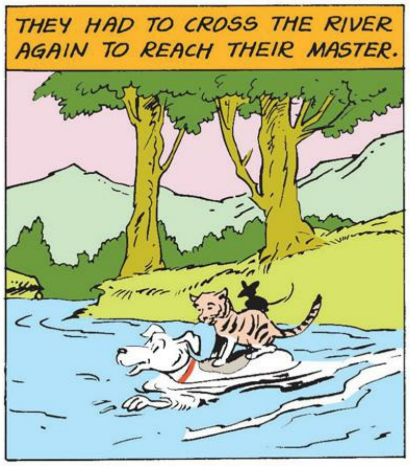

GR...GR...RRR.
OH! THE HAWK HAS IT!

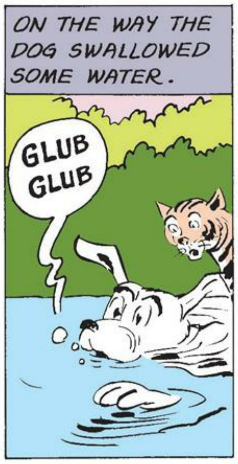

LISTEN...
A DEAD MOUSE!
CLINK

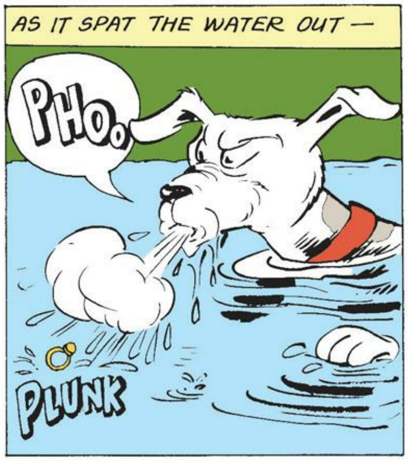

AS THE CAT PICKED UP THE RING THE DOG CAME ALONG.
WHAT HAPPENED?

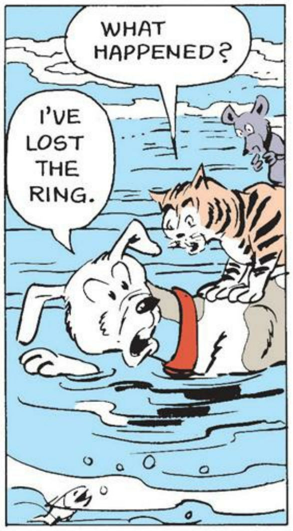

THE CROW TOLD THE DOG THE WHOLE STORY.
I THINK THE RING WOULD BE SAFER WITH YOU.

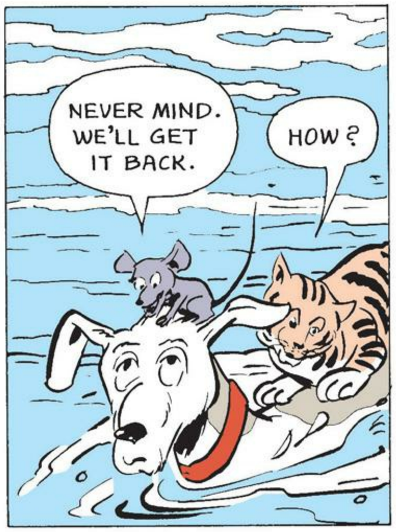

SO, THE DOG TOOK CHARGE OF THE RING AND THE FRIENDS BEGAN THEIR HOMEWARD JOURNEY.

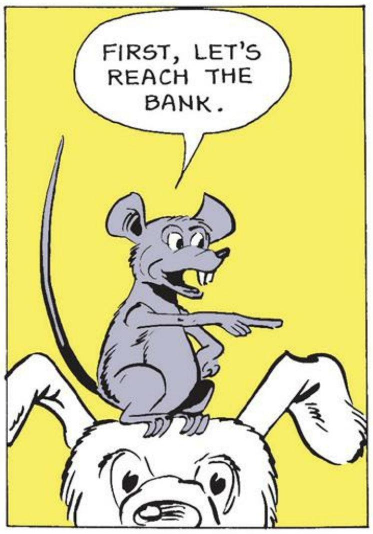

THEY HAD TO CROSS THE RIVER AGAIN TO REACH THEIR MASTER.

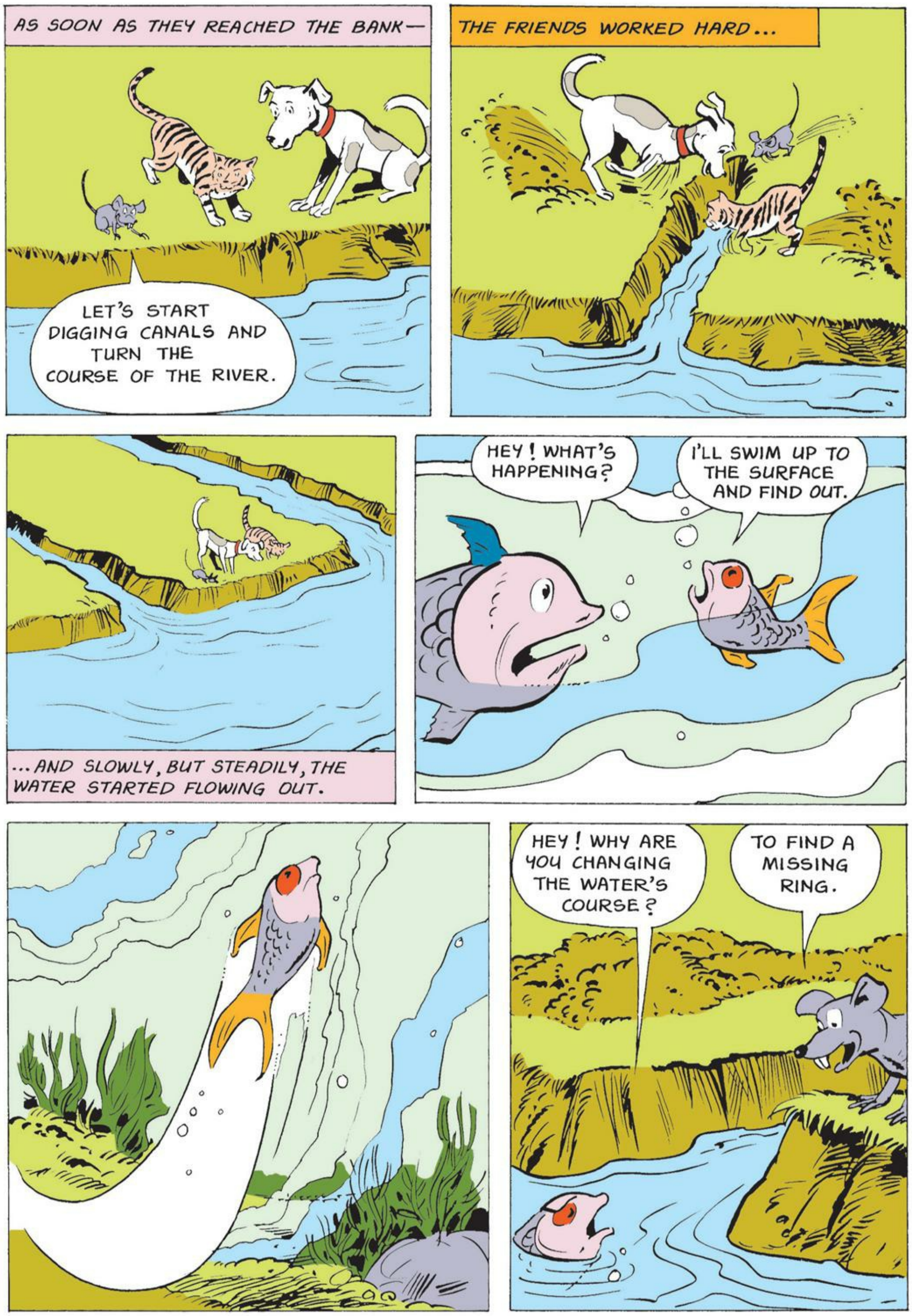

ON THE WAY THE DOG SWALLOWED SOME WATER.

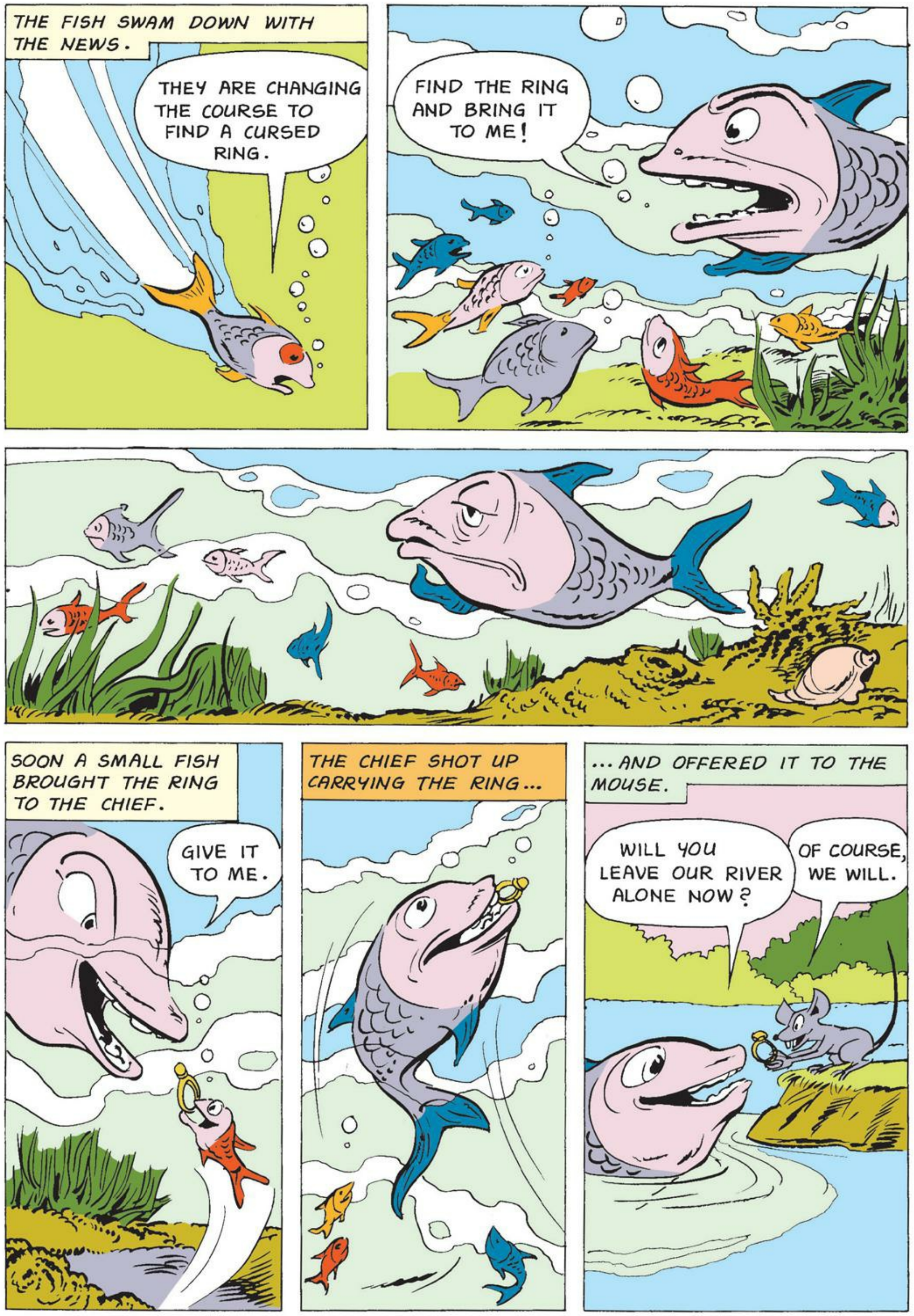

AS IT SPAT THE WATER OUT —

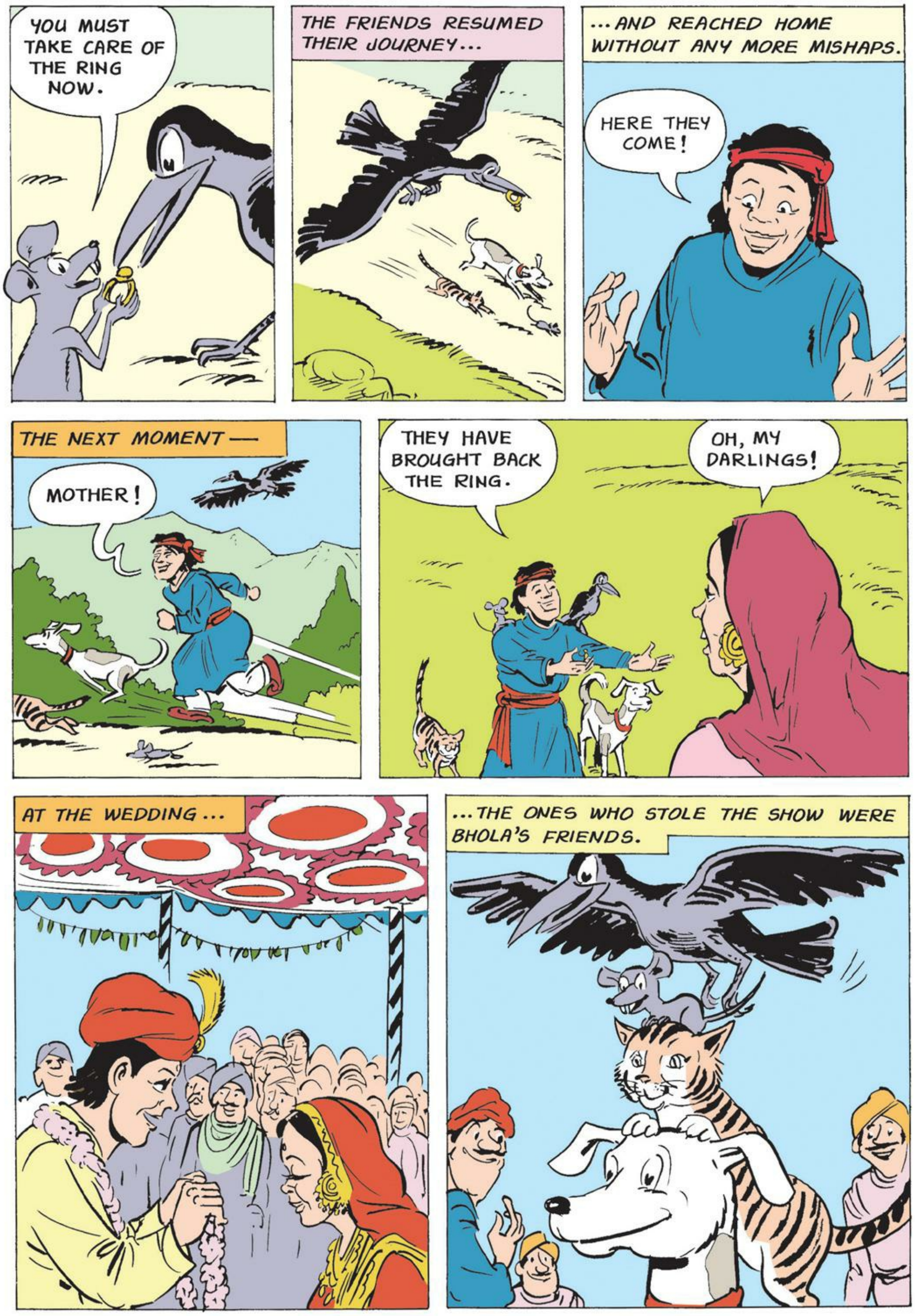

WHAT HAPPENED?
I'VE LOST THE RING.


NEVER MIND. WE'LL GET IT BACK.
HOW?

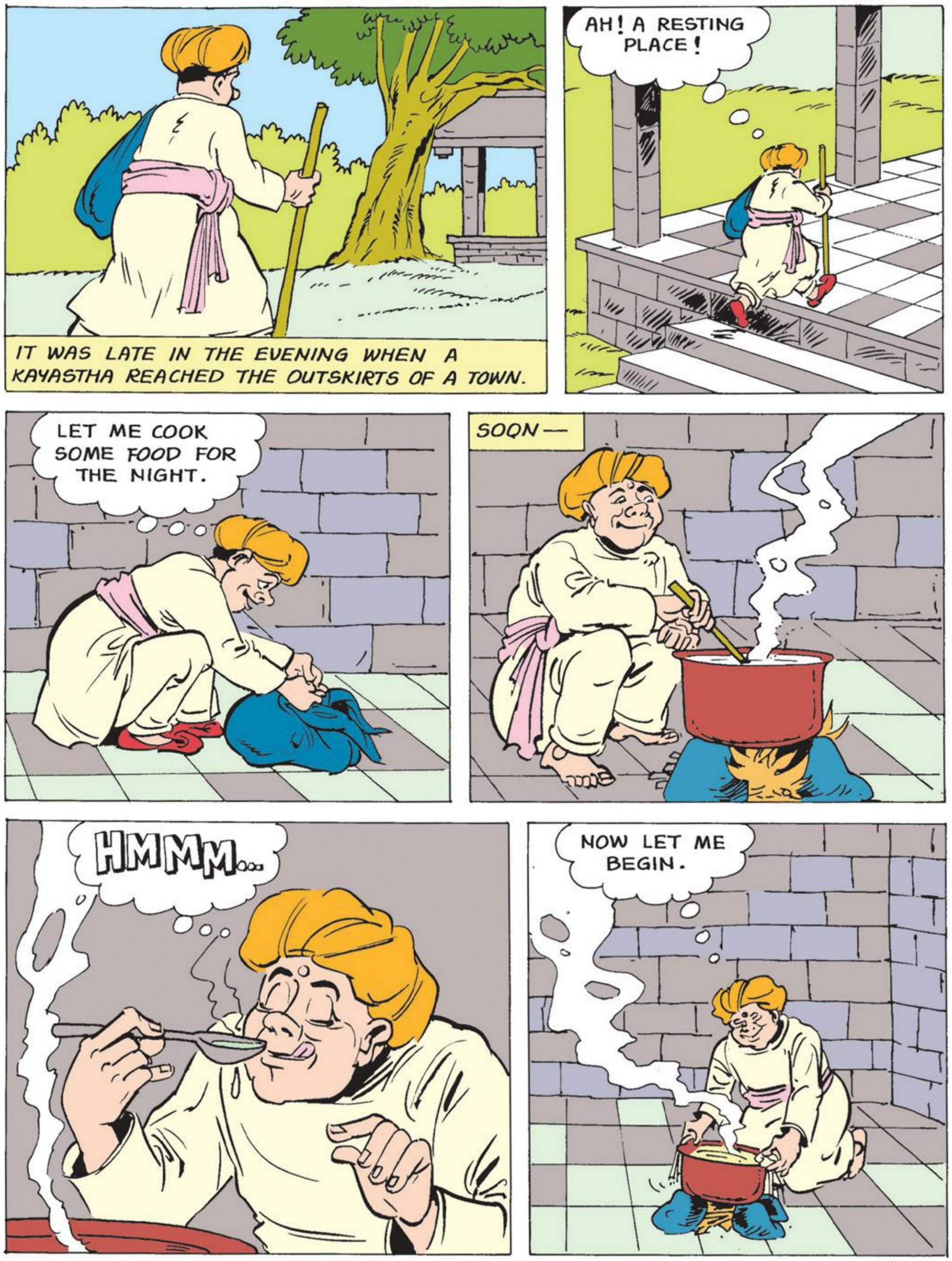

FIRST, LET'S REACH THE BANK.

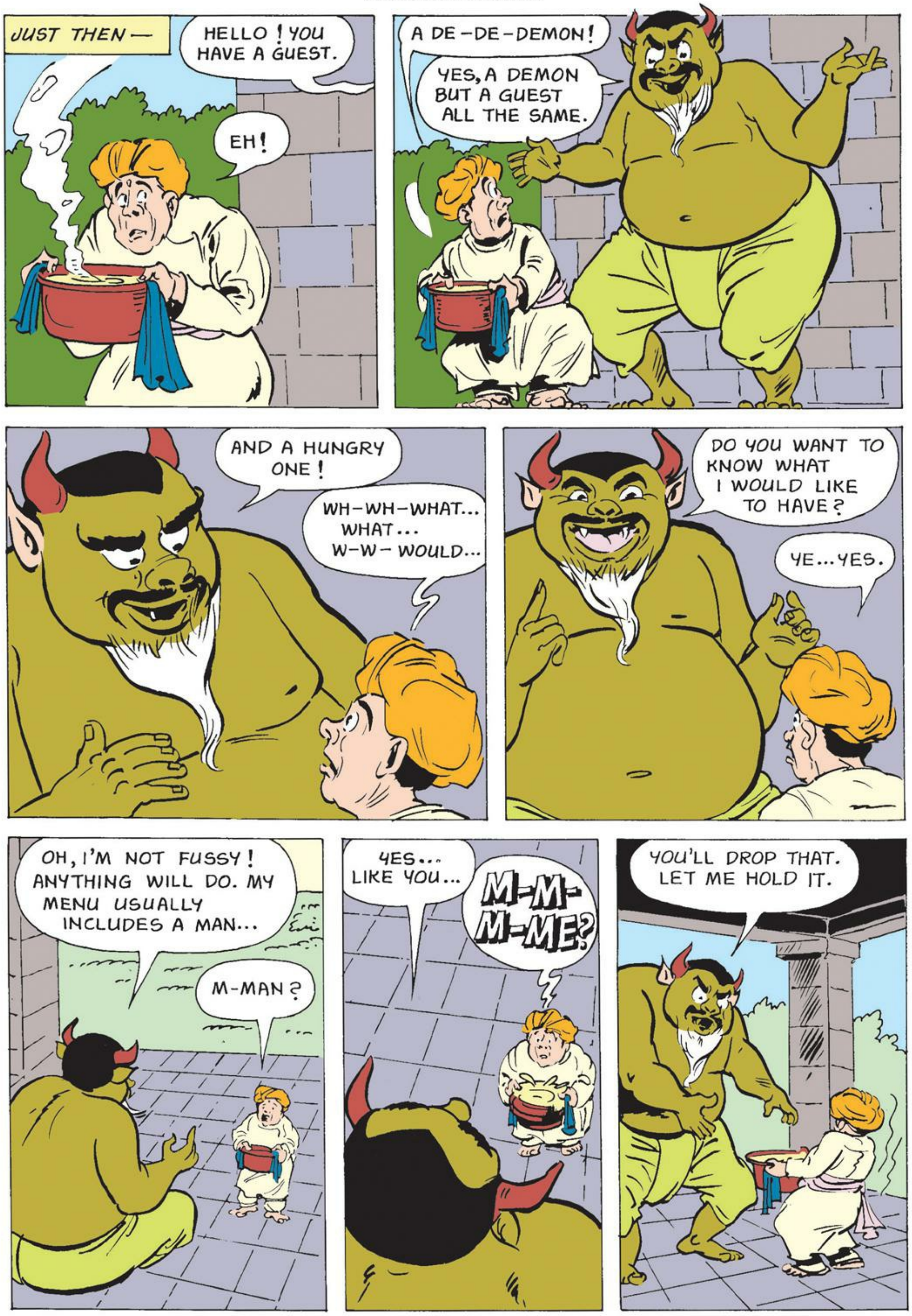

AS SOON AS THEY REACHED THE BANK—
LET'S START DIGGING CANALS AND TURN THE COURSE OF THE RIVER.
THE FRIENDS WORKED HARD...
...AND SLOWLY, BUT STEADILY, THE WATER STARTED FLOWING OUT.
HEY! WHAT'S HAPPENING?
I'LL SWIM UP TO THE SURFACE AND FIND OUT.
HEY! WHY ARE YOU CHANGING THE WATER'S COURSE?
TO FIND A MISSING RING.

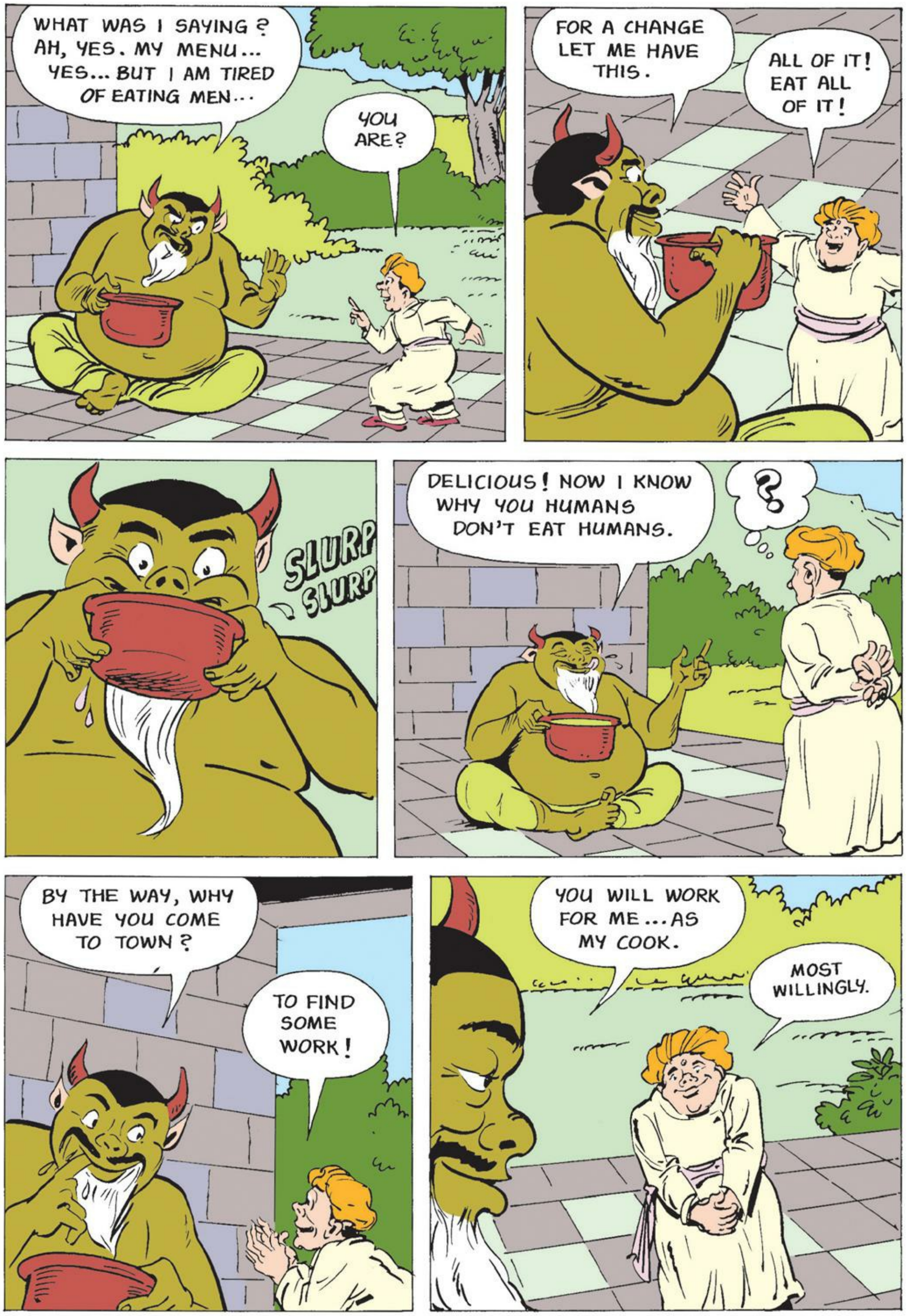

THE FISH SWAM DOWN WITH THE NEWS.
THEY ARE CHANGING THE COURSE TO FIND A CURSED RING.
FIND THE RING AND BRING IT TO ME!
SOON A SMALL FISH BROUGHT THE RING TO THE CHIEF.
GIVE IT TO ME.
THE CHIEF SHOT UP CARRYING THE RING...
...AND OFFERED IT TO THE MOUSE.
WILL YOU LEAVE OUR RIVER ALONE NOW?
OF COURSE, WE WILL.

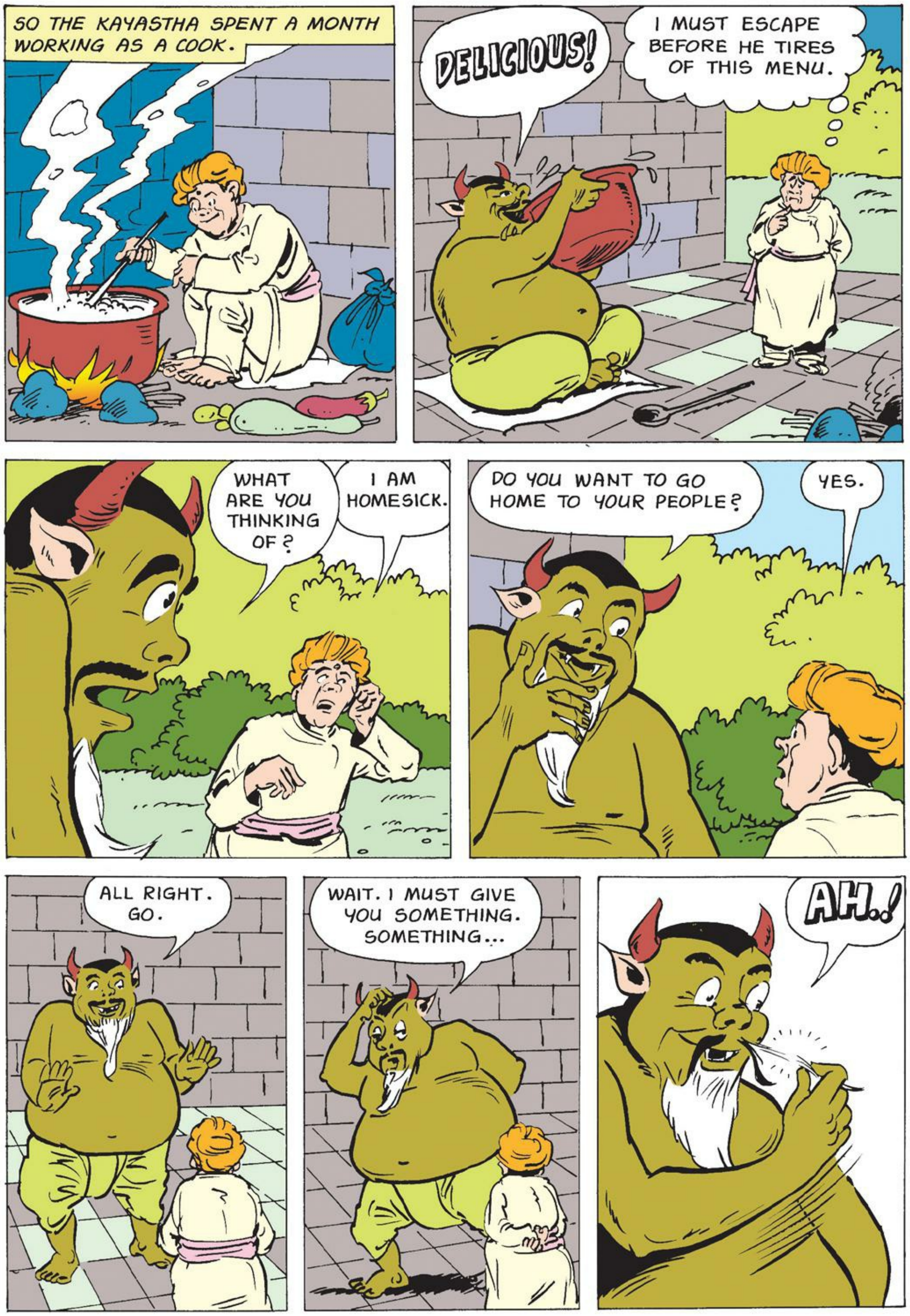

YOU MUST TAKE CARE OF THE RING NOW.
THE FRIENDS RESUMED THEIR JOURNEY...
...AND REACHED HOME WITHOUT ANY MORE MISHAPS.
HERE THEY COME!
THE NEXT MOMENT —
MOTHER!
THEY HAVE BROUGHT BACK THE RING.
OH, MY DARLINGS!
AT THE WEDDING...
...THE ONES WHO STOLE THE SHOW WERE BHOLA'S FRIENDS.

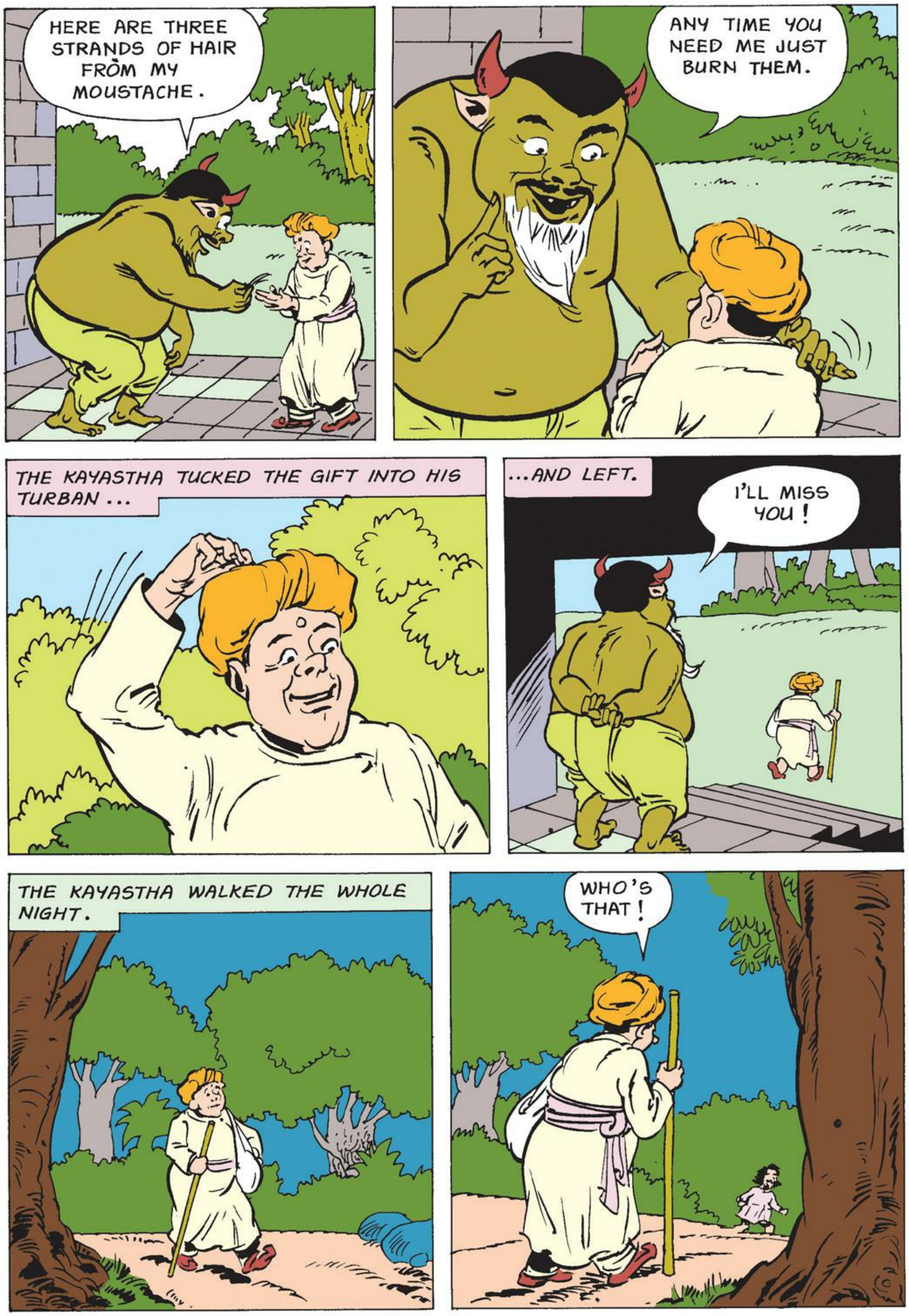
THE KAYASTHA AND HIS GUEST

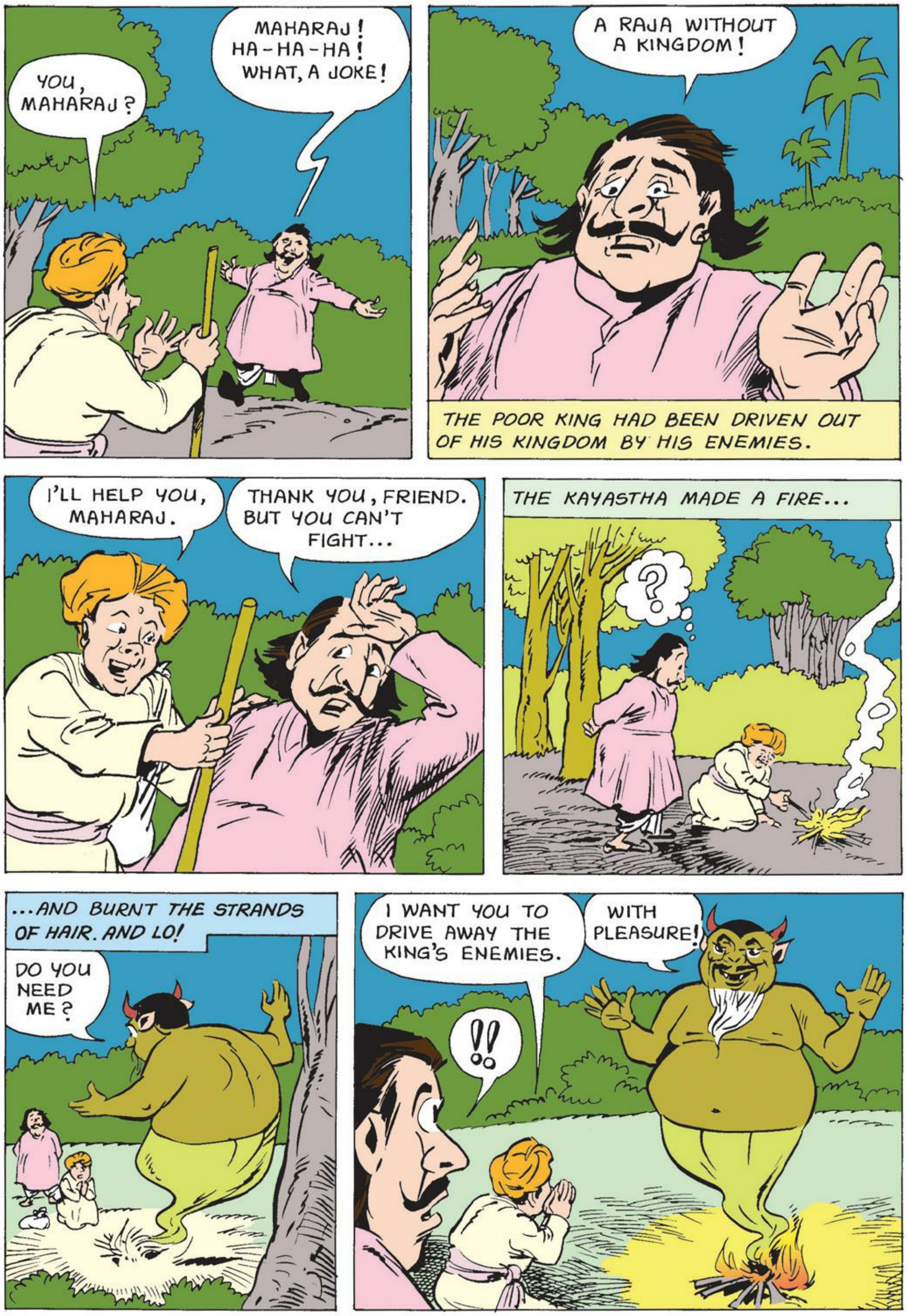

IT WAS LATE IN THE EVENING WHEN A KAYASTHA REACHED THE OUTSKIRTS OF A TOWN.
AH! A RESTING PLACE!
LET ME COOK SOME FOOD FOR THE NIGHT.
SOON —
HMMM...
NOW LET ME BEGIN.

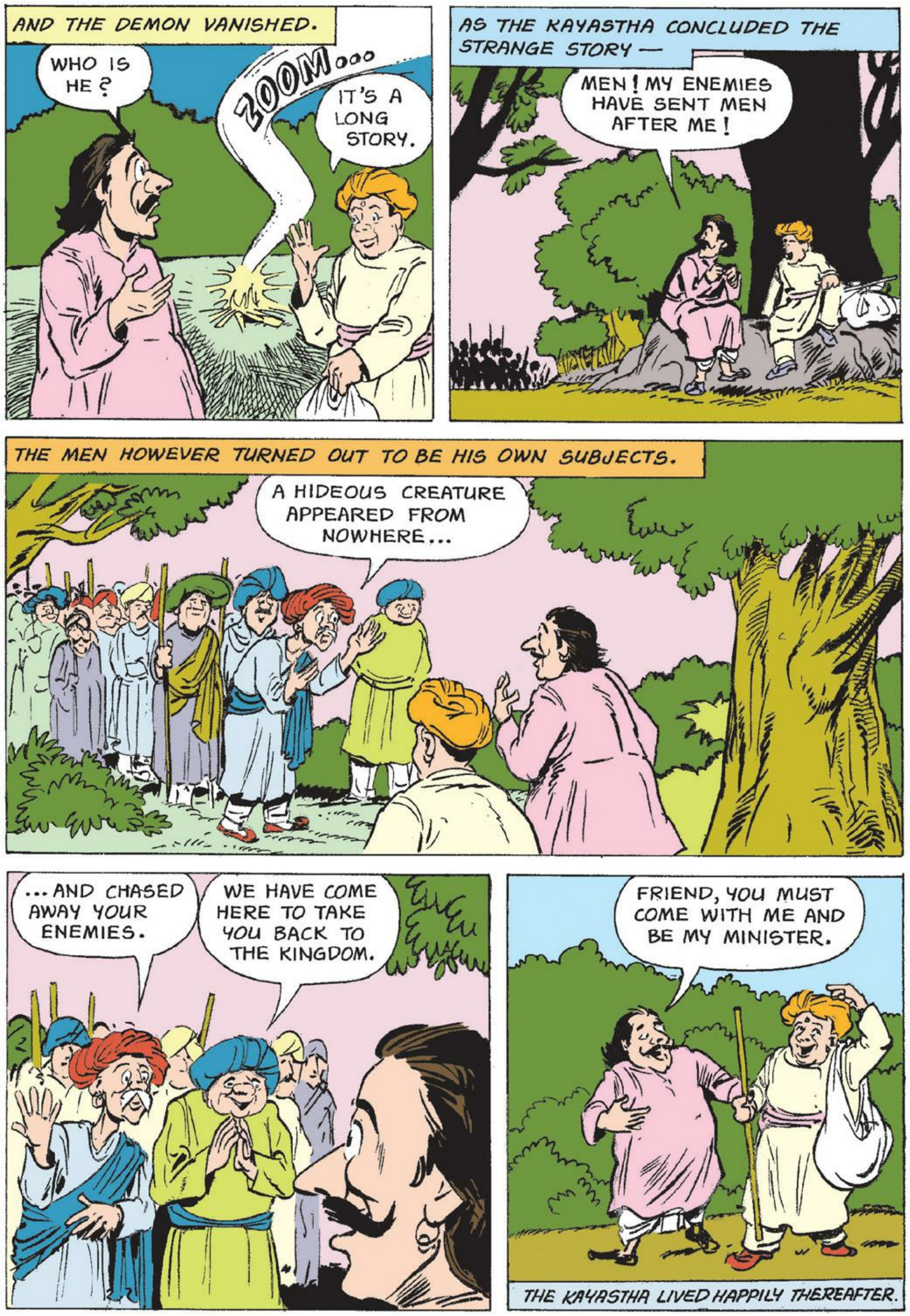

JUST THEN —
HELLO ! YOU HAVE A GUEST.
EH!
A DE-DE-DEMON!
YES, A DEMON BUT A GUEST ALL THE SAME.
AND A HUNGRY ONE !
WH-WH-WHAT... WHAT... W-W-WOULD...
DO YOU WANT TO KNOW WHAT I WOULD LIKE TO HAVE ?
YE... YES.
OH, I'M NOT FUSSY ! ANYTHING WILL DO. MY MENU USUALLY INCLUDES A MAN...
M-MAN ?
YES... LIKE YOU...
M-M-M-ME?
YOU'LL DROP THAT. LET ME HOLD IT.


WHAT WAS I SAYING ? AH, YES. MY MENU... YES... BUT I AM TIRED OF EATING MEN...
YOU ARE?
FOR A CHANGE LET ME HAVE THIS.
ALL OF IT! EAT ALL OF IT!
SLURP SLURP
DELICIOUS! NOW I KNOW WHY YOU HUMANS DON'T EAT HUMANS.
?
BY THE WAY, WHY HAVE YOU COME TO TOWN ?
TO FIND SOME WORK!
YOU WILL WORK FOR ME... AS MY COOK.
MOST WILLINGLY.


SO THE KAYASTHA SPENT A MONTH WORKING AS A COOK.
DELICIOUS!
I MUST ESCAPE BEFORE HE TIRES OF THIS MENU.
WHAT ARE YOU THINKING OF?
I AM HOMESICK.
DO YOU WANT TO GO HOME TO YOUR PEOPLE?
YES.
ALL RIGHT. GO.
WAIT. I MUST GIVE YOU SOMETHING. SOMETHING...
AH..!


HERE ARE THREE STRANDS OF HAIR FROM MY MOUSTACHE.
ANY TIME YOU NEED ME JUST BURN THEM.
THE KAYASTHA TUCKED THE GIFT INTO HIS TURBAN ...
...AND LEFT.
I'LL MISS YOU!
THE KAYASTHA WALKED THE WHOLE NIGHT.
WHO'S THAT!


YOU, MAHARAJ?
MAHARAJ! HA-HA-HA! WHAT, A JOKE!
A RAJA WITHOUT A KINGDOM!
THE POOR KING HAD BEEN DRIVEN OUT OF HIS KINGDOM BY HIS ENEMIES.
I'LL HELP YOU, MAHARAJ.
THANK YOU, FRIEND. BUT YOU CAN'T FIGHT...
THE KAYASTHA MADE A FIRE...
?
...AND BURNT THE STRANDS OF HAIR. AND LO!
DO YOU NEED ME?
I WANT YOU TO DRIVE AWAY THE KING'S ENEMIES.
WITH PLEASURE!
!!


AND THE DEMON VANISHED.
WHO IS HE ?
ZOOM...
IT'S A LONG STORY.
AS THE KAYASTHA CONCLUDED THE STRANGE STORY —
MEN ! MY ENEMIES HAVE SENT MEN AFTER ME !
THE MEN HOWEVER TURNED OUT TO BE HIS OWN SUBJECTS.
A HIDEOUS CREATURE APPEARED FROM NOWHERE...
...AND CHASED AWAY YOUR ENEMIES.
WE HAVE COME HERE TO TAKE YOU BACK TO THE KINGDOM.
FRIEND, YOU MUST COME WITH ME AND BE MY MINISTER.
THE KAYASTHA LIVED HAPPILY THEREAFTER.

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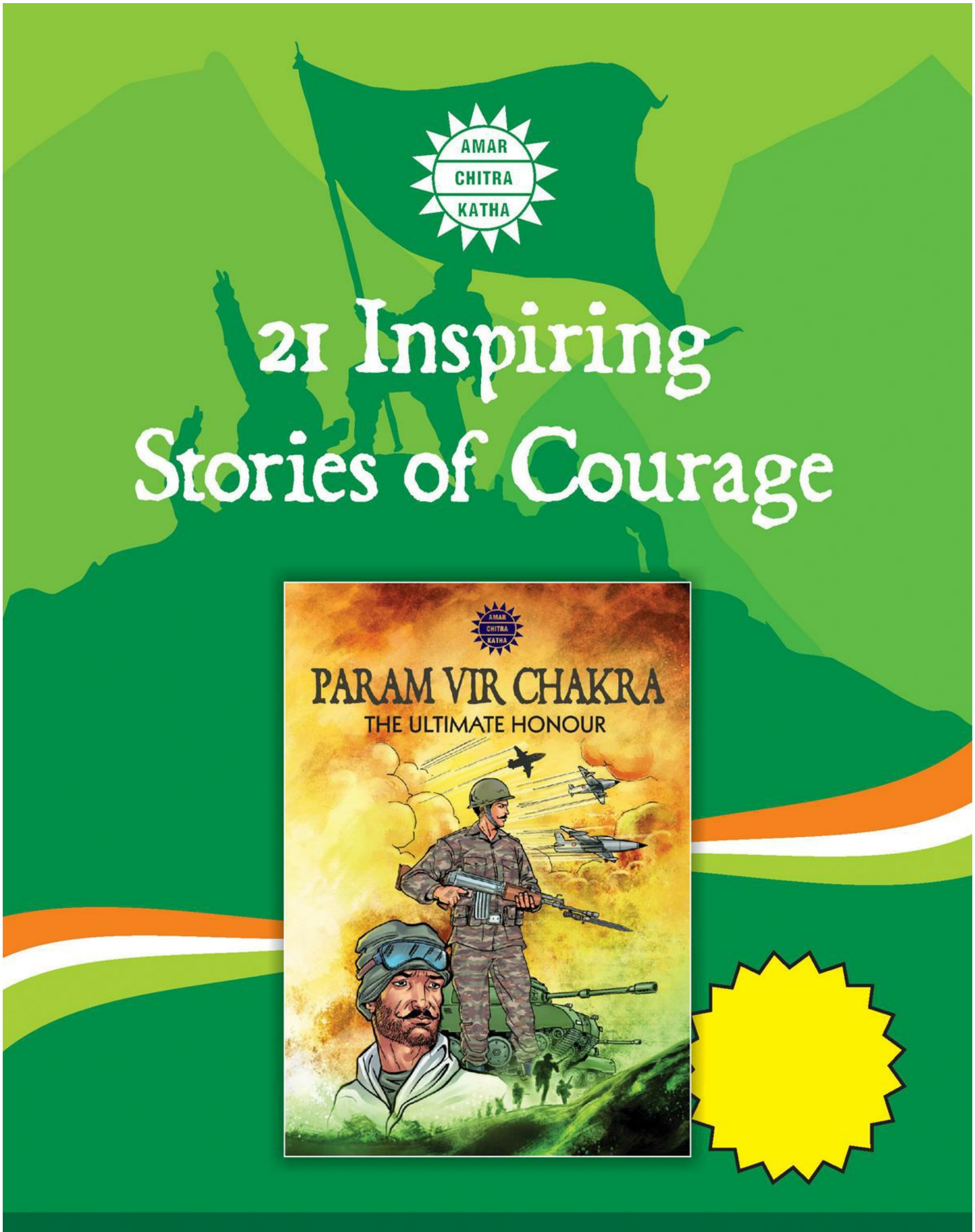
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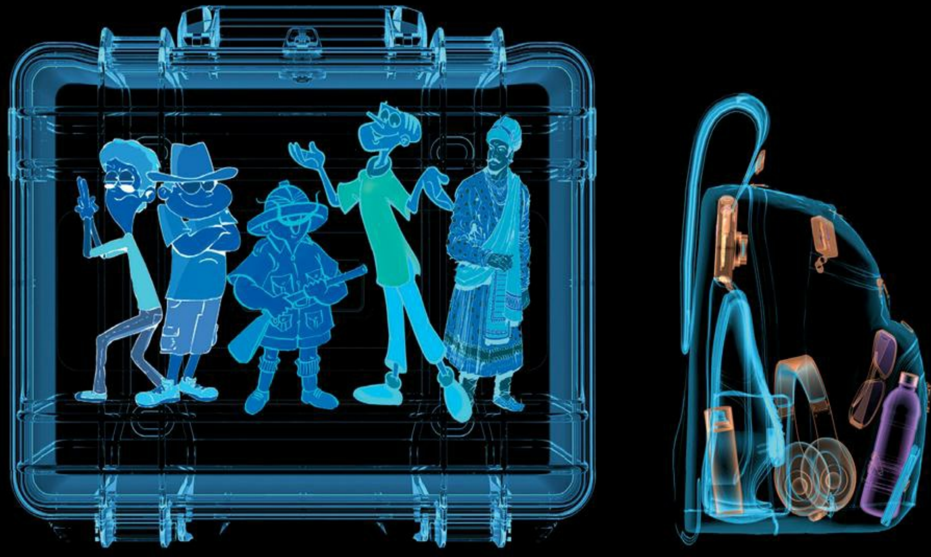

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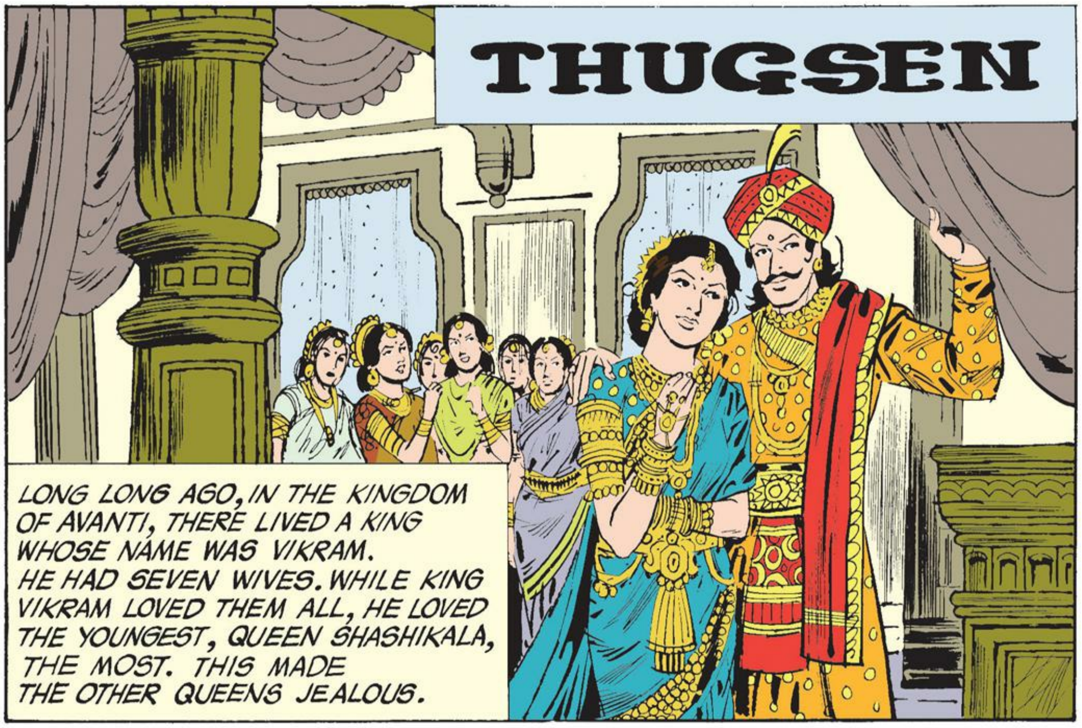
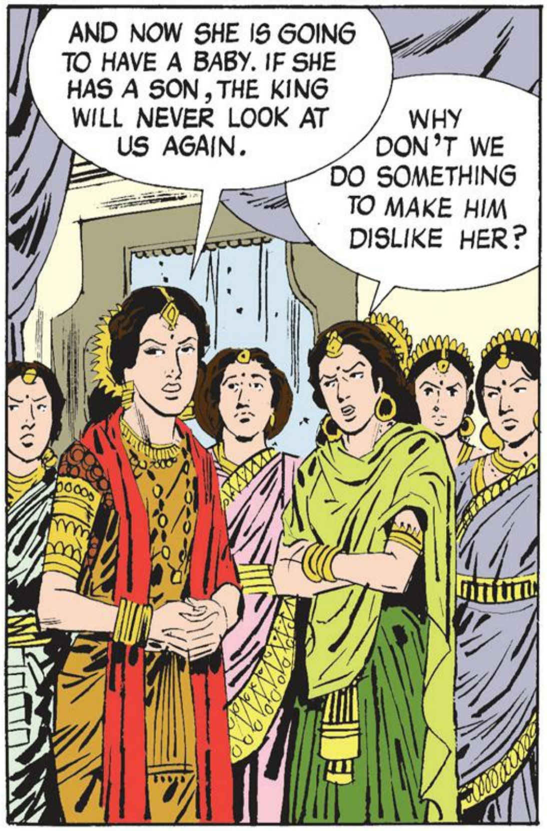
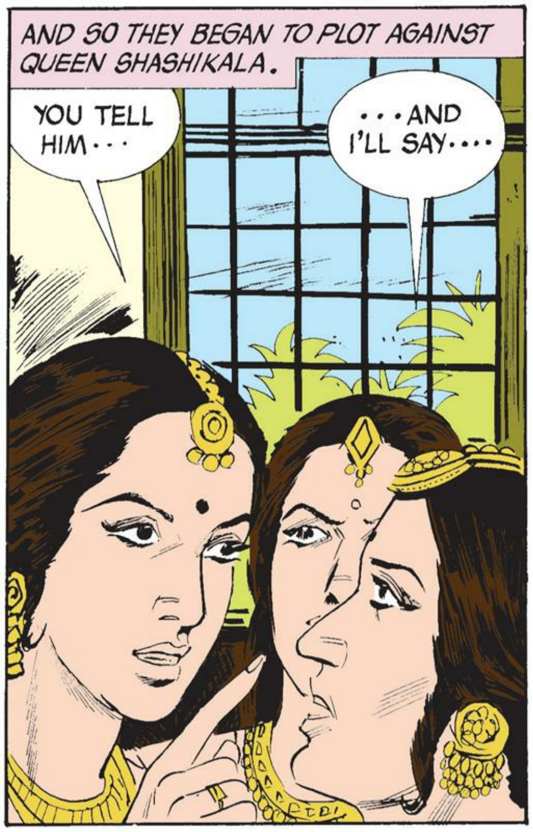
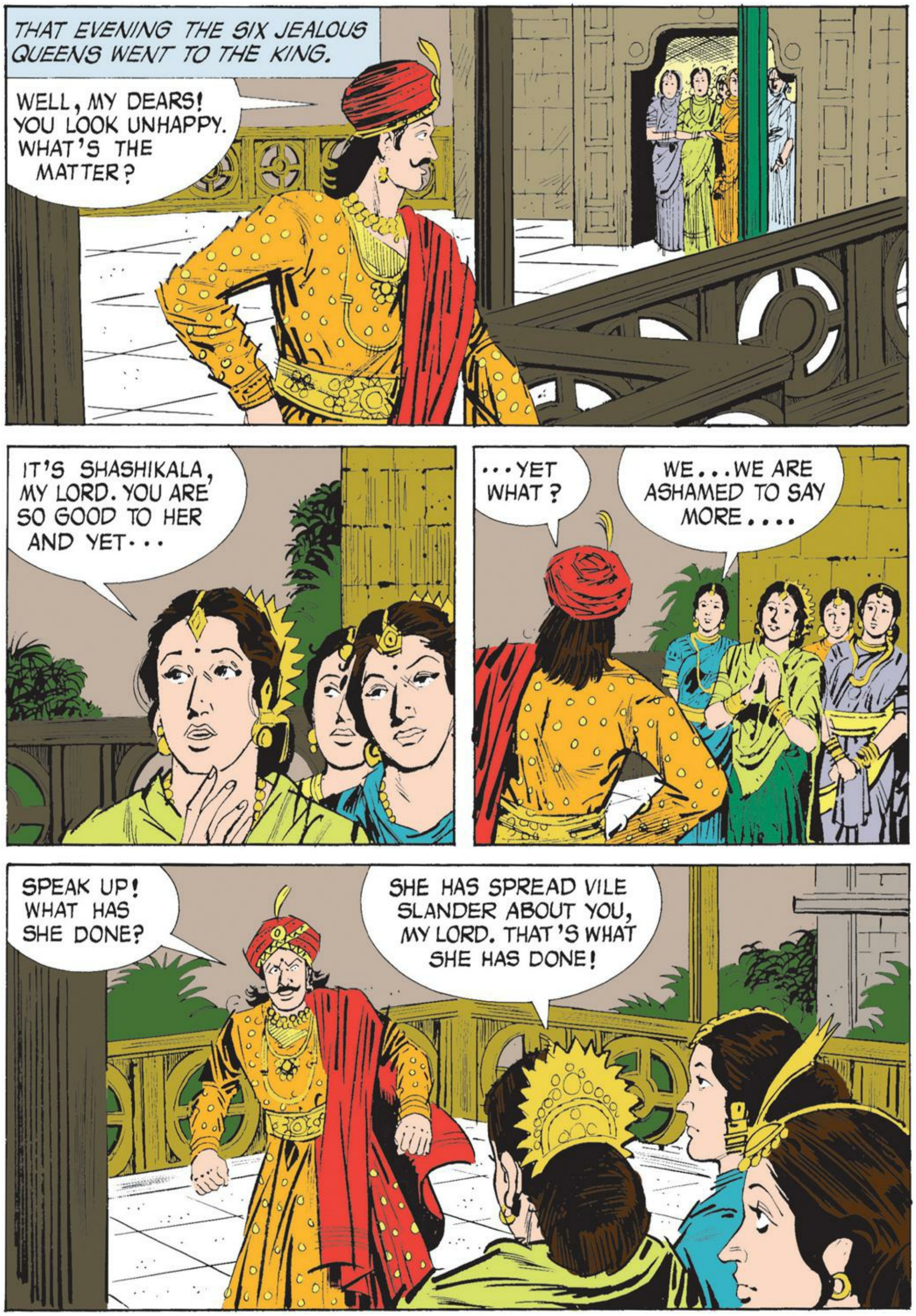
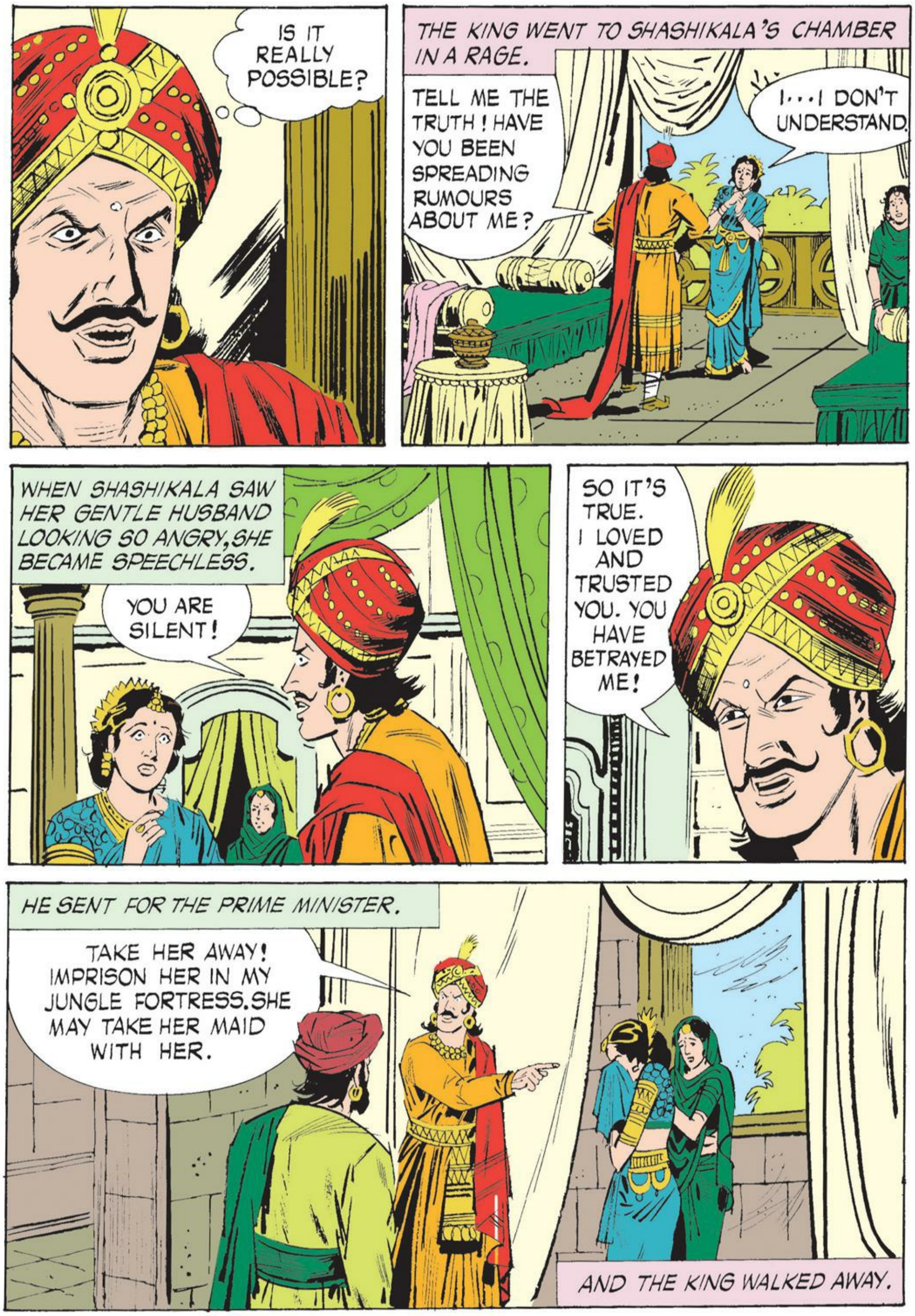
THUGSEN

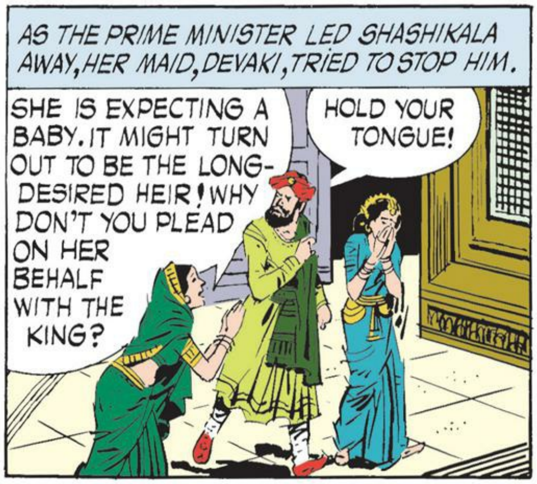

LONG LONG AGO, IN THE KINGDOM OF AVANTI, THERE LIVED A KING WHOSE NAME WAS VIKRAM. HE HAD SEVEN WIVES. WHILE KING VIKRAM LOVED THEM ALL, HE LOVED THE YOUNGEST, QUEEN SHASHIKALA, THE MOST. THIS MADE THE OTHER QUEENS JEALOUS.

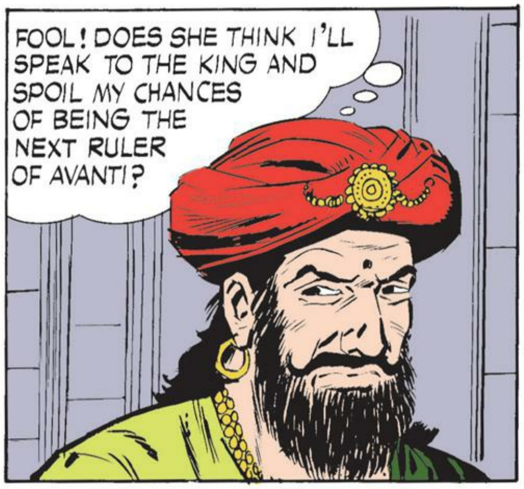

AND NOW SHE IS GOING TO HAVE A BABY. IF SHE HAS A SON, THE KING WILL NEVER LOOK AT US AGAIN.
WHY DON'T WE DO SOMETHING TO MAKE HIM DISLIKE HER?

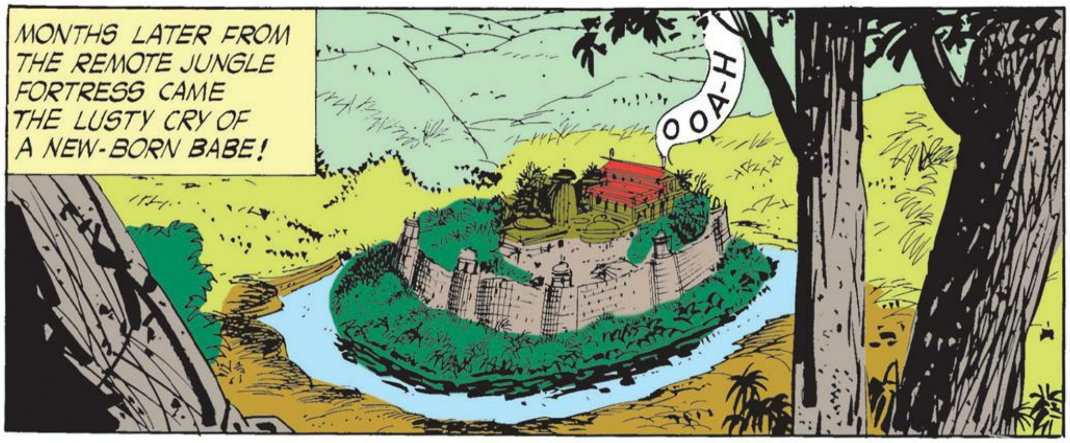

AND SO THEY BEGAN TO PLOT AGAINST QUEEN SHASHIKALA.
YOU TELL HIM...
...AND I'LL SAY....

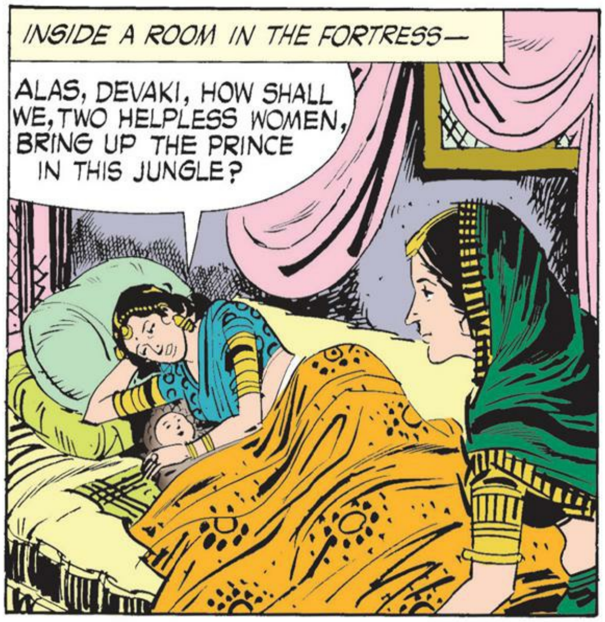

THAT EVENING THE SIX JEALOUS QUEENS WENT TO THE KING.
WELL, MY DEARS! YOU LOOK UNHAPPY. WHAT'S THE MATTER?
IT'S SHASHIKALA, MY LORD. YOU ARE SO GOOD TO HER AND YET...
...YET WHAT?
WE...WE ARE ASHAMED TO SAY MORE....
SPEAK UP! WHAT HAS SHE DONE?
SHE HAS SPREAD VILE SLANDER ABOUT YOU, MY LORD. THAT'S WHAT SHE HAS DONE!

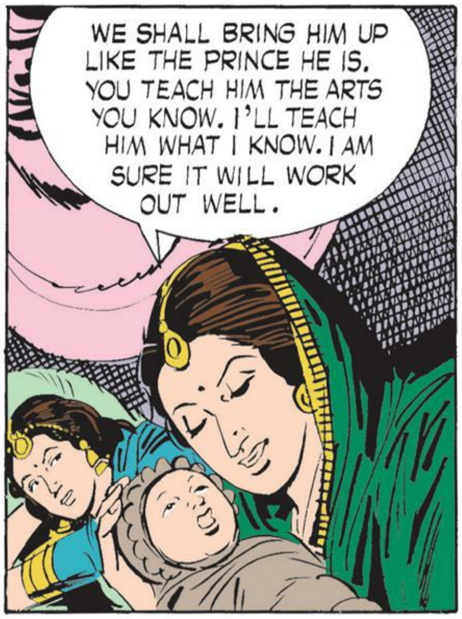

IS IT REALLY POSSIBLE?
THE KING WENT TO SHASHIKALA'S CHAMBER IN A RAGE.
TELL ME THE TRUTH! HAVE YOU BEEN SPREADING RUMOURS ABOUT ME?
I...I DON'T UNDERSTAND.
WHEN SHASHIKALA SAW HER GENTLE HUSBAND LOOKING SO ANGRY, SHE BECAME SPEECHLESS.
YOU ARE SILENT!
SO IT'S TRUE. I LOVED AND TRUSTED YOU. YOU HAVE BETRAYED ME!
HE SENT FOR THE PRIME MINISTER.
TAKE HER AWAY! IMPRISON HER IN MY JUNGLE FORTRESS. SHE MAY TAKE HER MAID WITH HER.
AND THE KING WALKED AWAY.

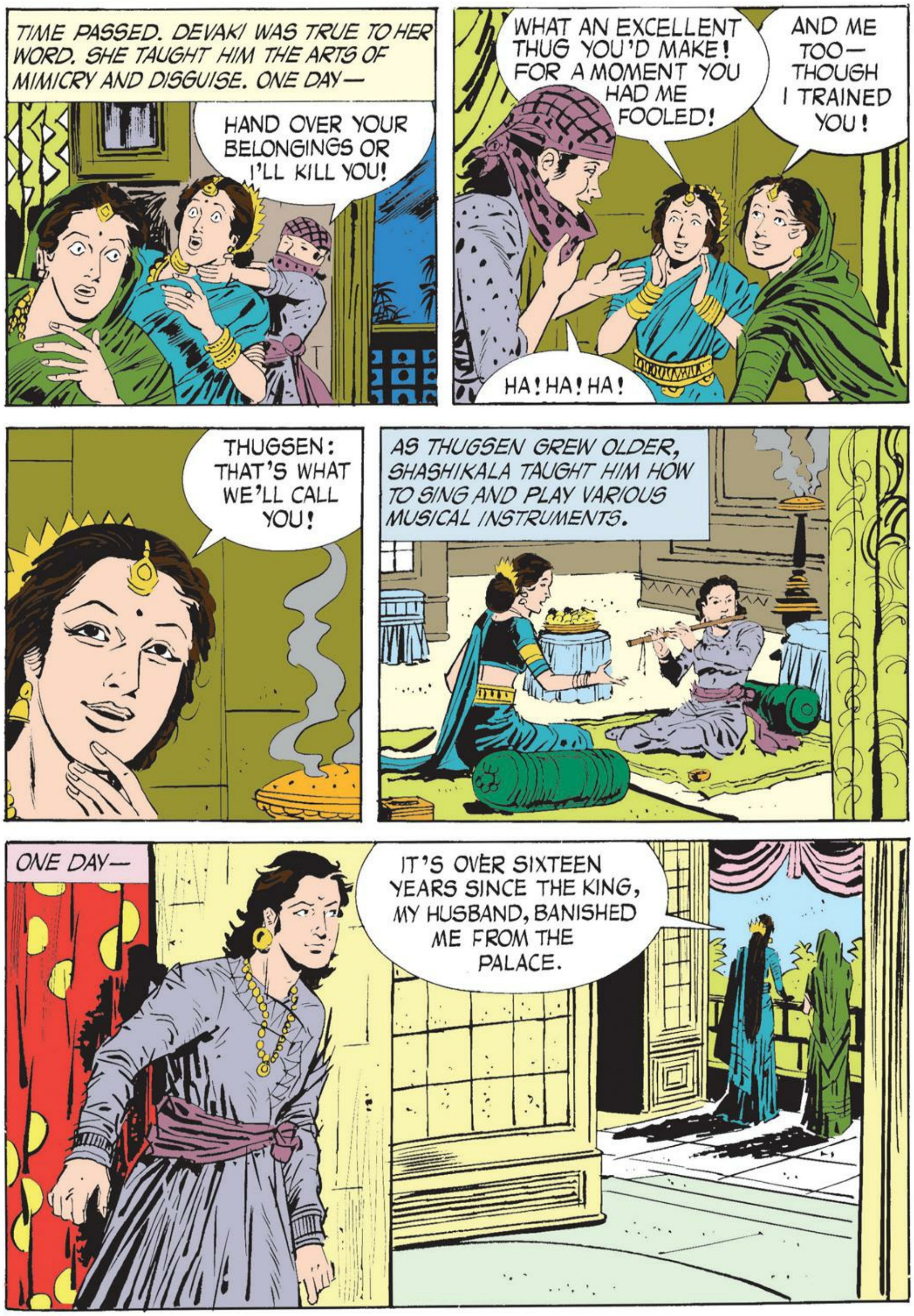

AS THE PRIME MINISTER LED SHASHIKALA AWAY, HER MAID, DEVAKI, TRIED TO STOP HIM.
SHE IS EXPECTING A BABY. IT MIGHT TURN OUT TO BE THE LONG-DESIRED HEIR! WHY DON'T YOU PLEAD ON HER BEHALF WITH THE KING?
HOLD YOUR TONGUE!

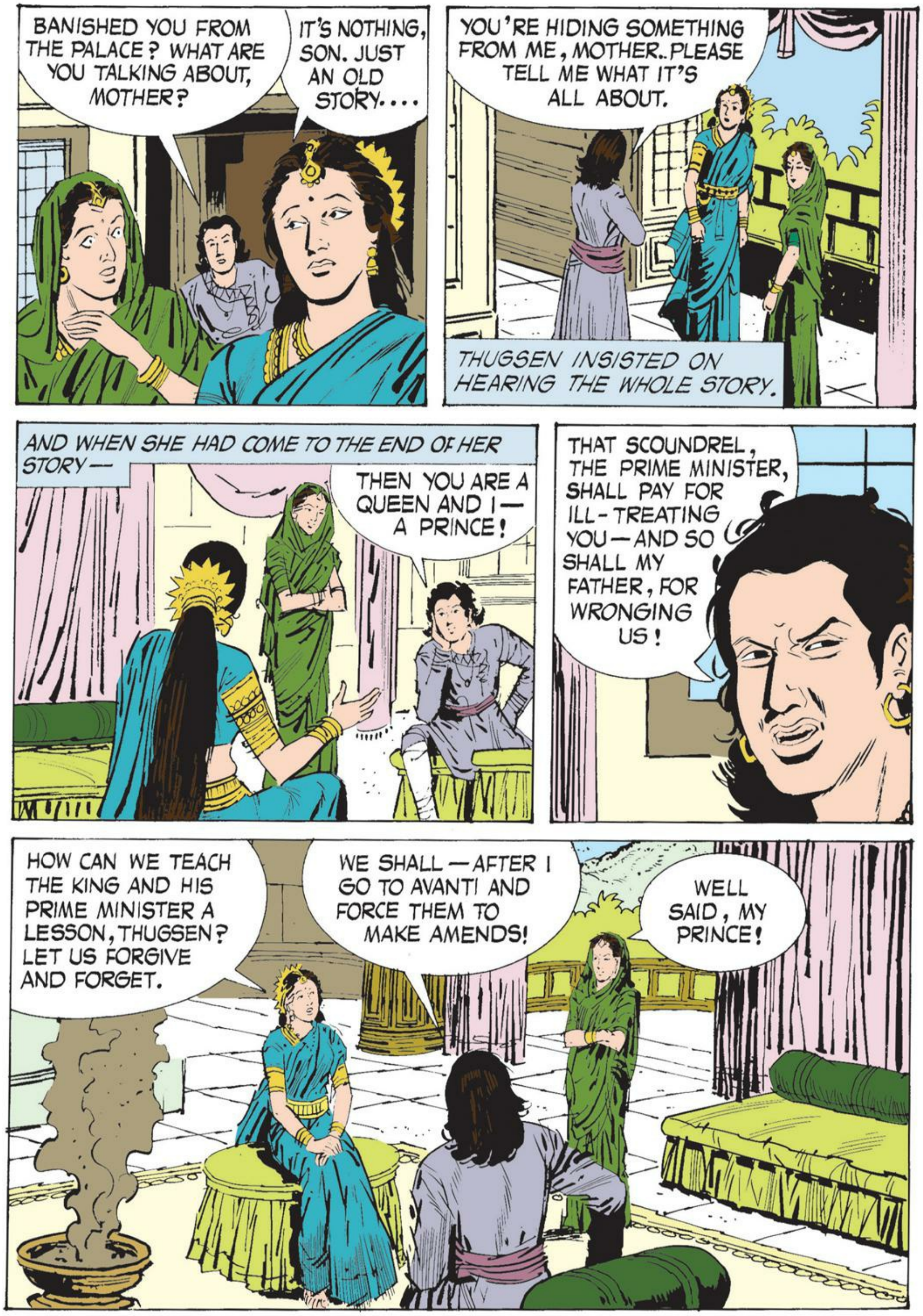

FOOL! DOES SHE THINK I'LL SPEAK TO THE KING AND SPOIL MY CHANCES OF BEING THE NEXT RULER OF AVANTI?

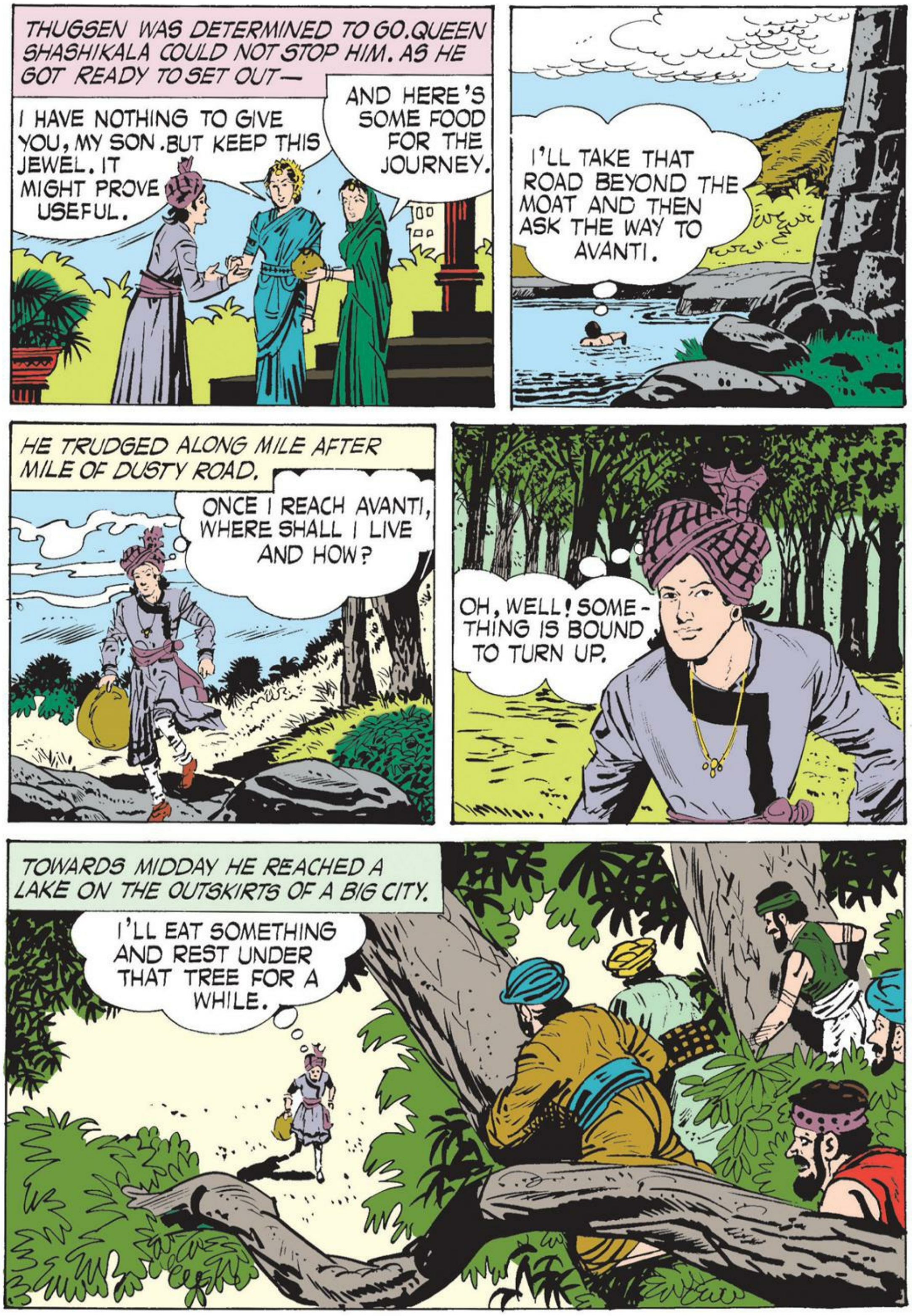

MONTHS LATER FROM THE REMOTE JUNGLE FORTRESS CAME THE LUSTY CRY OF A NEW-BORN BABE!
OOA-H

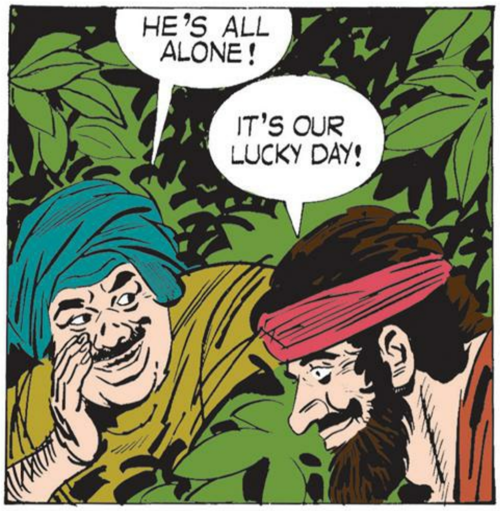

INSIDE A ROOM IN THE FORTRESS—
ALAS, DEVAKI, HOW SHALL WE, TWO HELPLESS WOMEN, BRING UP THE PRINCE IN THIS JUNGLE?

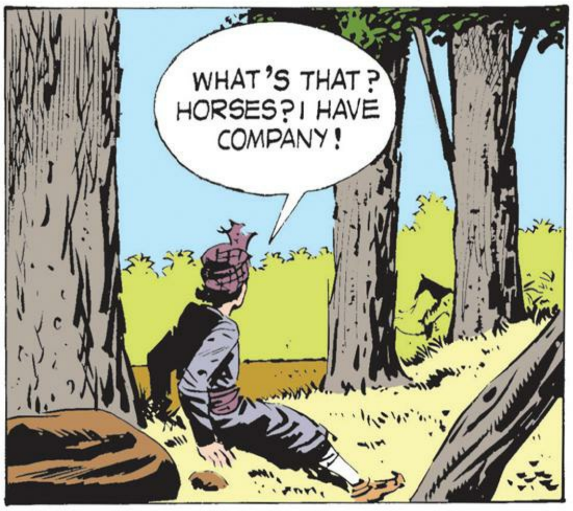

WE SHALL BRING HIM UP LIKE THE PRINCE HE IS. YOU TEACH HIM THE ARTS YOU KNOW. I'LL TEACH HIM WHAT I KNOW. I AM SURE IT WILL WORK OUT WELL.

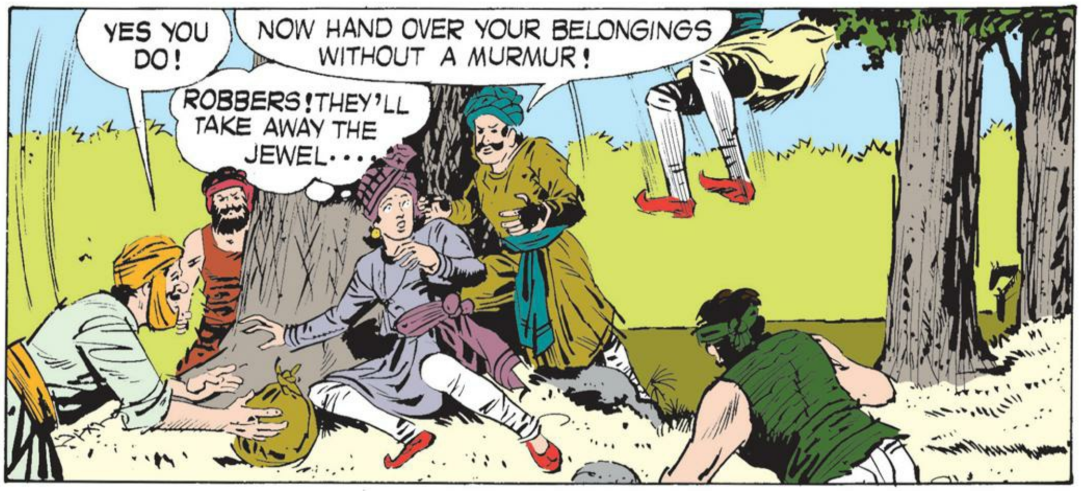

TIME PASSED. DEVAKI WAS TRUE TO HER WORD. SHE TAUGHT HIM THE ARTS OF MIMICRY AND DISGUISE. ONE DAY—
HAND OVER YOUR BELONGINGS OR I'LL KILL YOU!
WHAT AN EXCELLENT THUG YOU'D MAKE! FOR A MOMENT YOU HAD ME FOOLED!
AND ME TOO— THOUGH I TRAINED YOU!
HA! HA! HA!
THUGSEN: THAT'S WHAT WE'LL CALL YOU!
AS THUGSEN GREW OLDER, SHASHIKALA TAUGHT HIM HOW TO SING AND PLAY VARIOUS MUSICAL INSTRUMENTS.
ONE DAY—
IT'S OVER SIXTEEN YEARS SINCE THE KING, MY HUSBAND, BANISHED ME FROM THE PALACE.

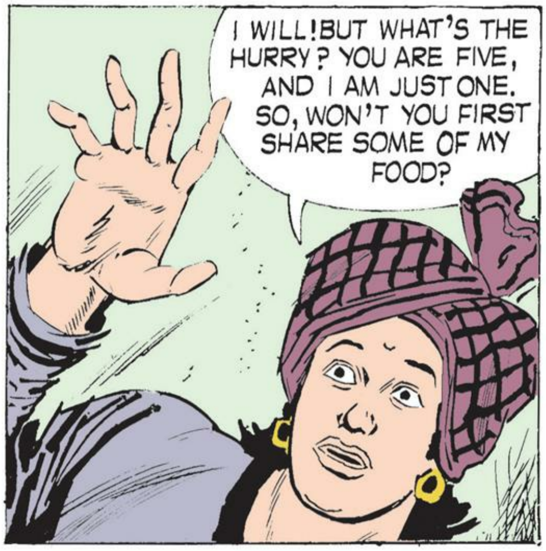

BANISHED YOU FROM THE PALACE? WHAT ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT, MOTHER?
IT'S NOTHING, SON. JUST AN OLD STORY....
YOU'RE HIDING SOMETHING FROM ME, MOTHER.. PLEASE TELL ME WHAT IT'S ALL ABOUT.
THUGSEN INSISTED ON HEARING THE WHOLE STORY.
AND WHEN SHE HAD COME TO THE END OF HER STORY—
THEN YOU ARE A QUEEN AND I— A PRINCE!
THAT SCOUNDREL, THE PRIME MINISTER, SHALL PAY FOR ILL-TREATING YOU—AND SO SHALL MY FATHER, FOR WRONGING US!
HOW CAN WE TEACH THE KING AND HIS PRIME MINISTER A LESSON, THUGSEN? LET US FORGIVE AND FORGET.
WE SHALL—AFTER I GO TO AVANTI AND FORCE THEM TO MAKE AMENDS!
WELL SAID, MY PRINCE!

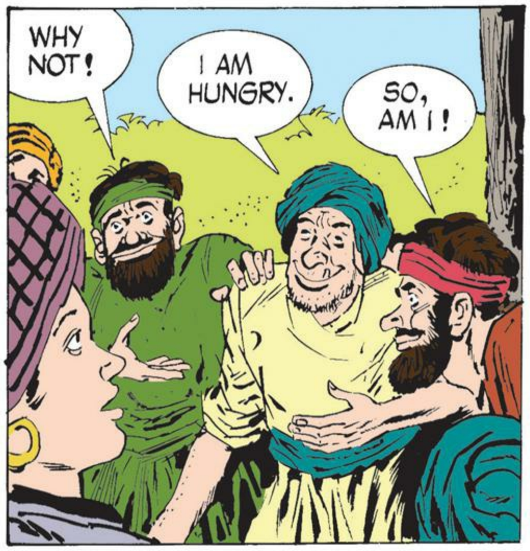

THUGSEN WAS DETERMINED TO GO. QUEEN SHASHIKALA COULD NOT STOP HIM. AS HE GOT READY TO SET OUT—
I HAVE NOTHING TO GIVE YOU, MY SON. BUT KEEP THIS JEWEL. IT MIGHT PROVE USEFUL.
AND HERE'S SOME FOOD FOR THE JOURNEY.
I'LL TAKE THAT ROAD BEYOND THE MOAT AND THEN ASK THE WAY TO AVANTI.
HE TRUDGED ALONG MILE AFTER MILE OF DUSTY ROAD.
ONCE I REACH AVANTI, WHERE SHALL I LIVE AND HOW?
OH, WELL! SOMETHING IS BOUND TO TURN UP.
TOWARDS MIDDAY HE REACHED A LAKE ON THE OUTSKIRTS OF A BIG CITY.
I'LL EAT SOMETHING AND REST UNDER THAT TREE FOR A WHILE.

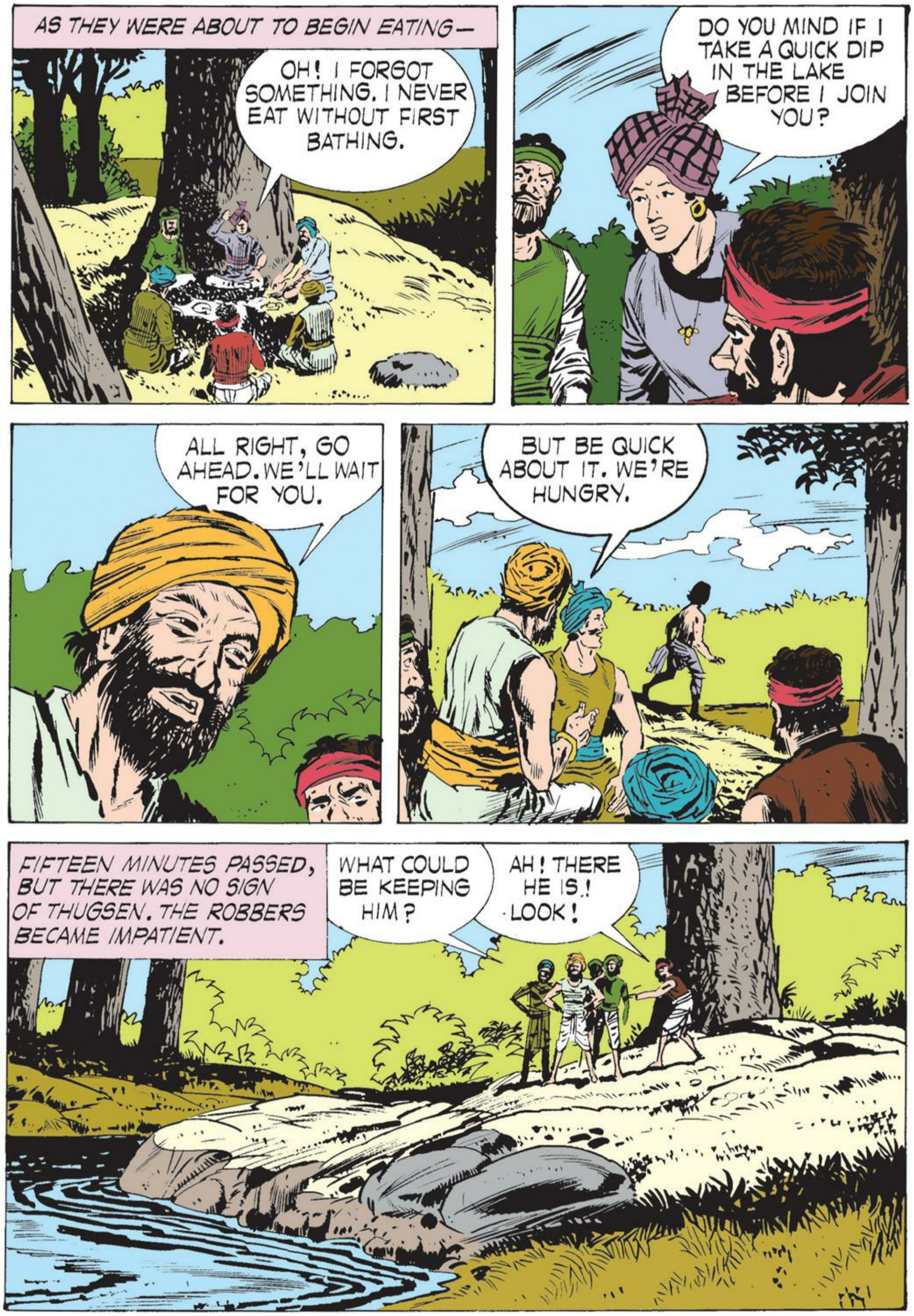

HE'S ALL ALONE!
IT'S OUR LUCKY DAY!

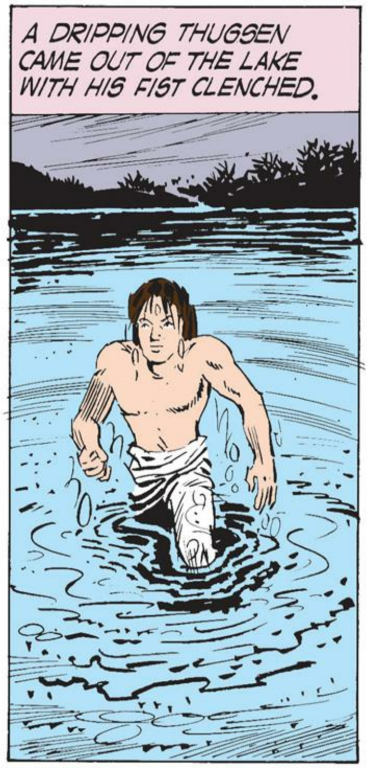

WHAT'S THAT? HORSES? I HAVE COMPANY!

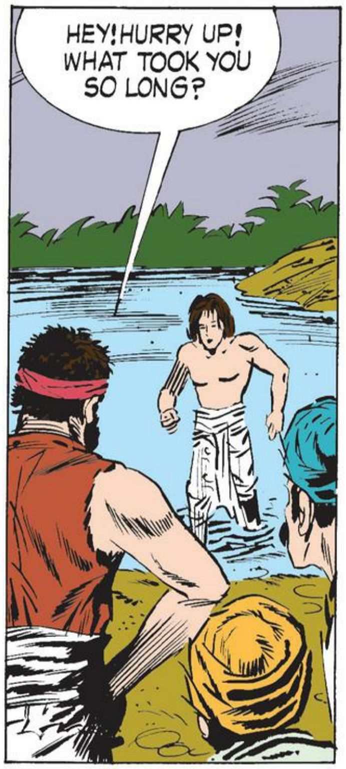

YES YOU DO!
NOW HAND OVER YOUR BELONGINGS WITHOUT A MURMUR!
ROBBERS! THEY'LL TAKE AWAY THE JEWEL...

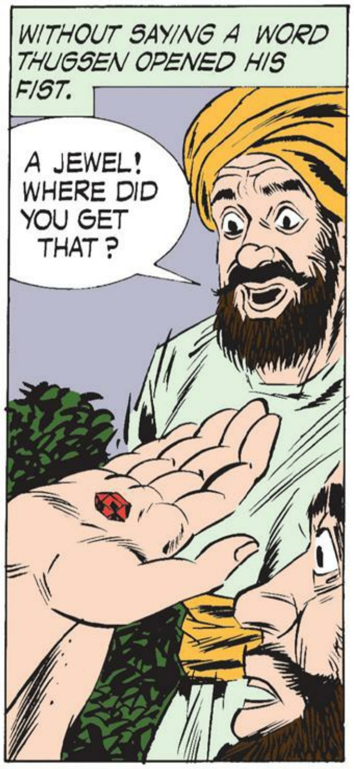

I WILL! BUT WHAT'S THE HURRY? YOU ARE FIVE, AND I AM JUST ONE. SO, WON'T YOU FIRST SHARE SOME OF MY FOOD?

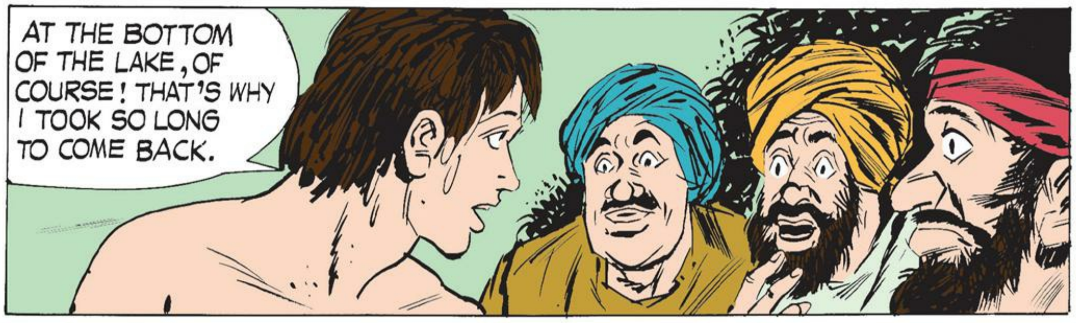

WHY NOT!
I AM HUNGRY.
SO, AM I!

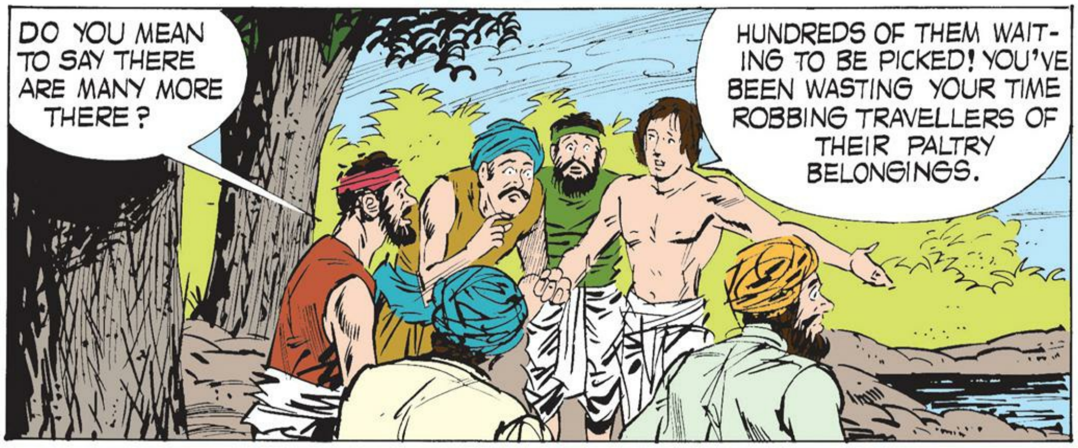

AS THEY WERE ABOUT TO BEGIN EATING—
OH! I FORGOT SOMETHING. I NEVER EAT WITHOUT FIRST BATHING.
DO YOU MIND IF I TAKE A QUICK DIP IN THE LAKE BEFORE I JOIN YOU?
ALL RIGHT, GO AHEAD. WE'LL WAIT FOR YOU.
BUT BE QUICK ABOUT IT. WE'RE HUNGRY.
FIFTEEN MINUTES PASSED, BUT THERE WAS NO SIGN OF THUGSEN. THE ROBBERS BECAME IMPATIENT.
WHAT COULD BE KEEPING HIM?
AH! THERE HE IS! LOOK!

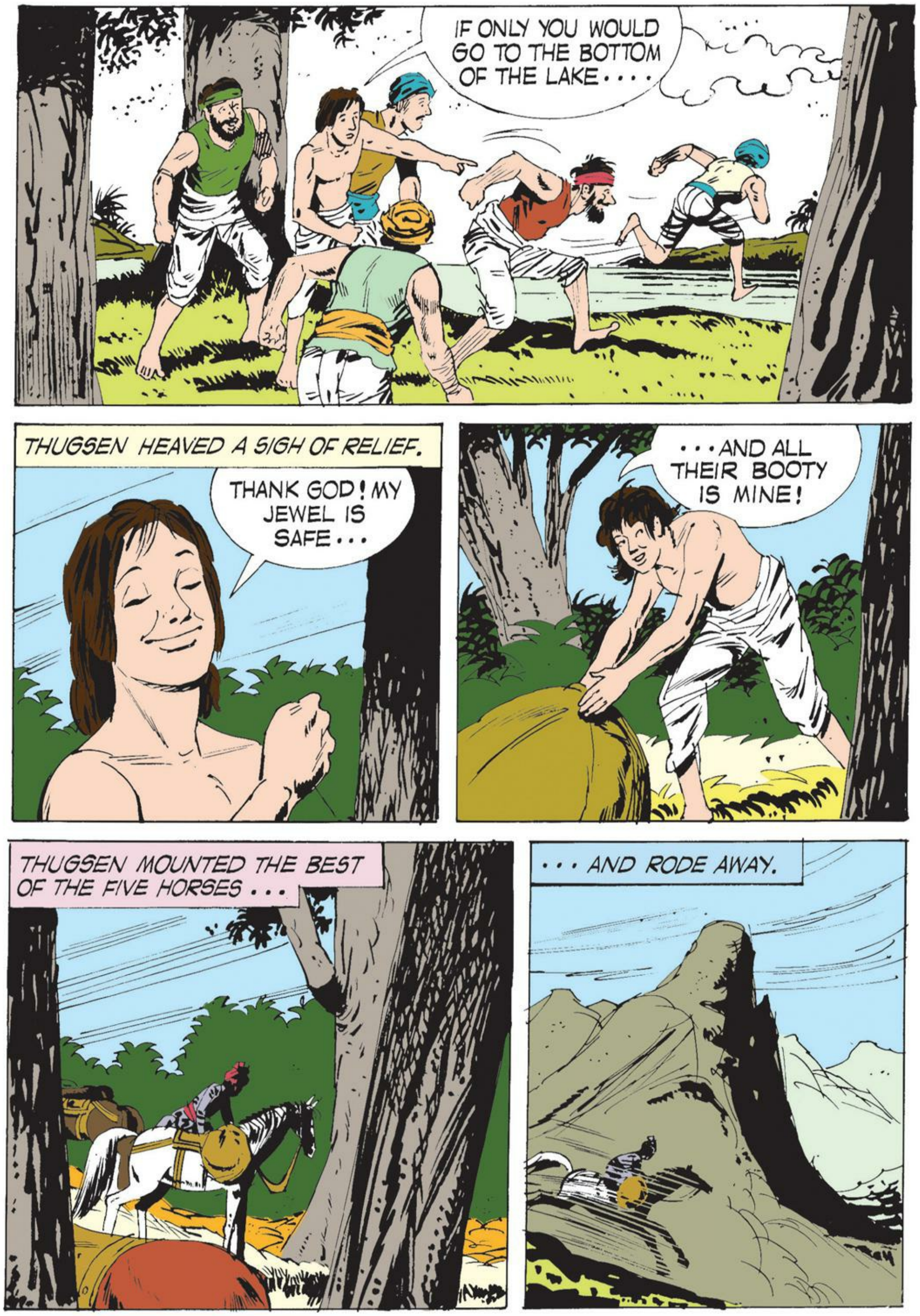

A DRIPPING THUGSEN CAME OUT OF THE LAKE WITH HIS FIST CLENCHED.

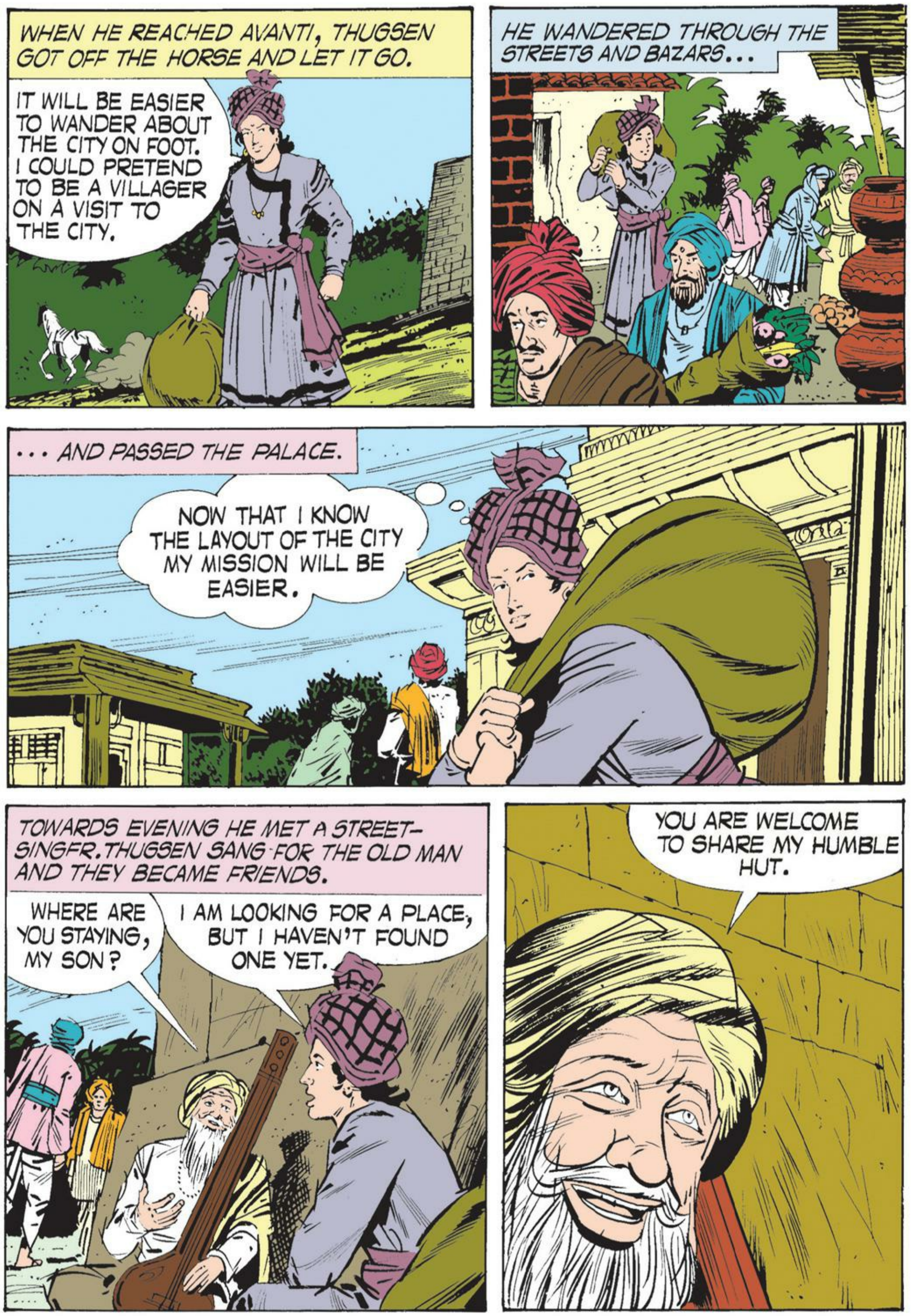

HEY! HURRY UP! WHAT TOOK YOU SO LONG?

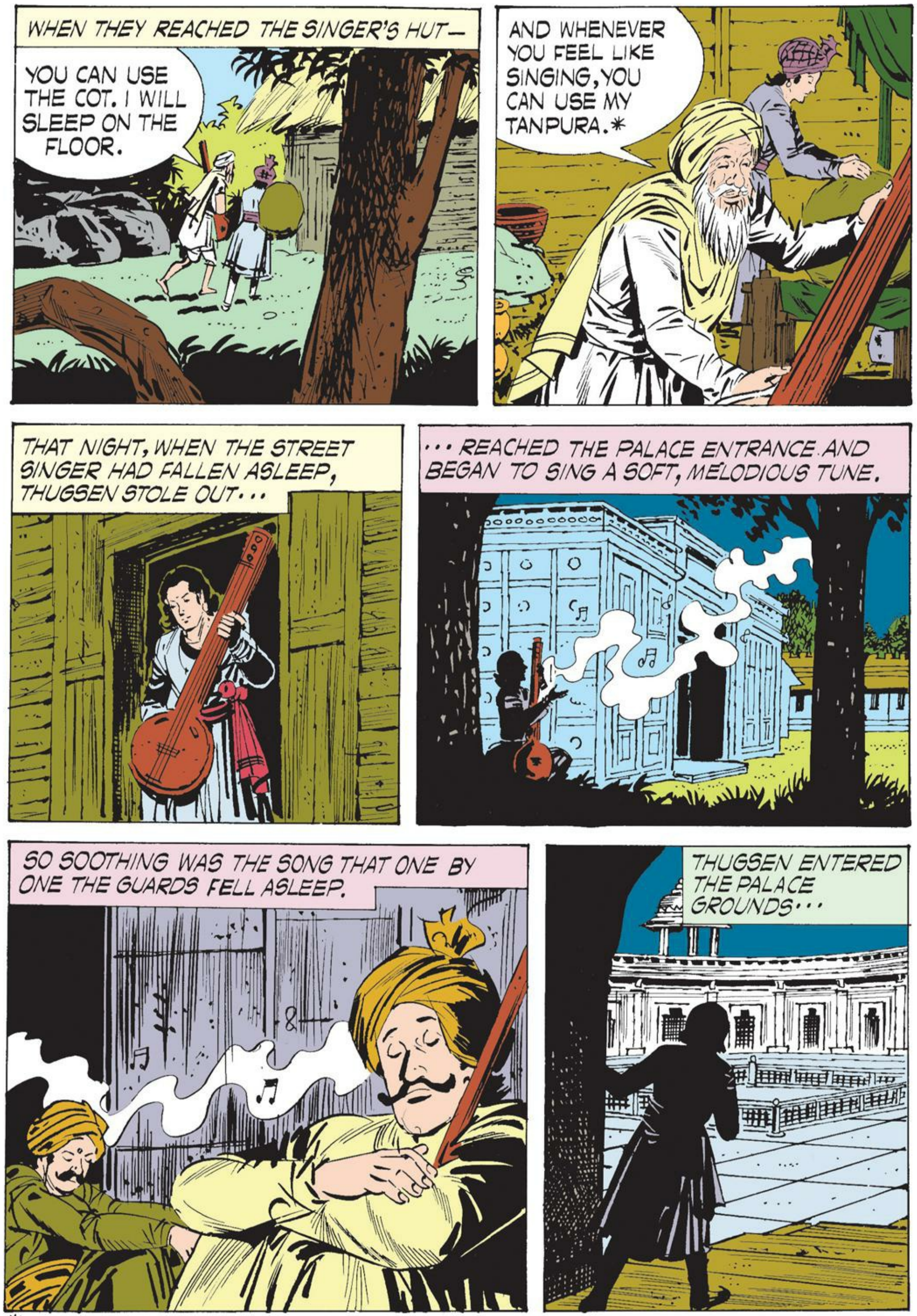

WITHOUT SAYING A WORD THUGSEN OPENED HIS FIST.
A JEWEL! WHERE DID YOU GET THAT?


AT THE BOTTOM OF THE LAKE, OF COURSE! THAT'S WHY I TOOK SO LONG TO COME BACK.

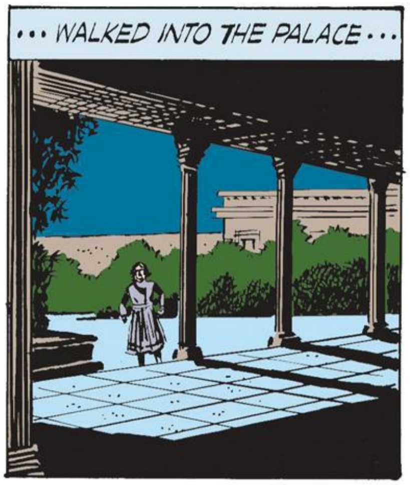

DO YOU MEAN TO SAY THERE ARE MANY MORE THERE?
HUNDREDS OF THEM WAITING TO BE PICKED! YOU'VE BEEN WASTING YOUR TIME ROBBING TRAVELLERS OF THEIR PALTRY BELONGINGS.

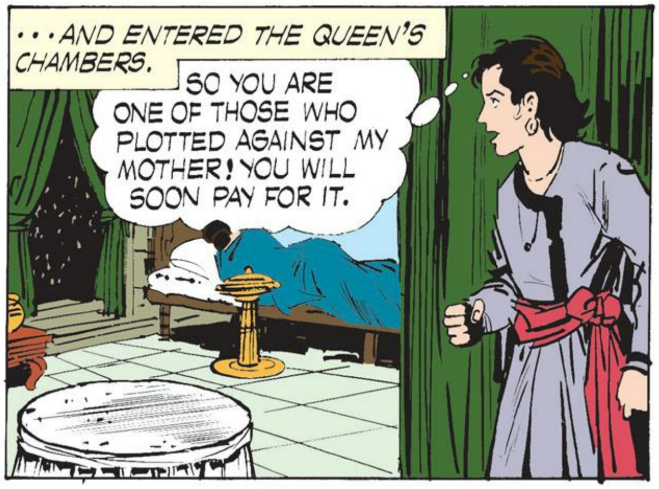

IF ONLY YOU WOULD GO TO THE BOTTOM OF THE LAKE . . . .
THUGSEN HEAVED A SIGH OF RELIEF.
THANK GOD! MY JEWEL IS SAFE . . .
. . . AND ALL THEIR BOOTY IS MINE!
THUGSEN MOUNTED THE BEST OF THE FIVE HORSES . . .
. . . AND RODE AWAY.

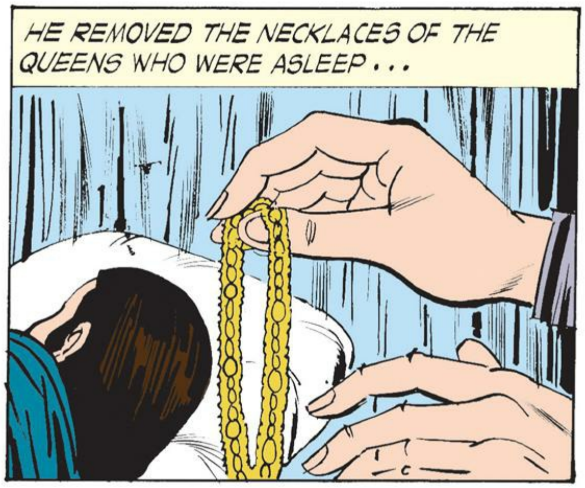

WHEN HE REACHED AVANTI, THUGSEN GOT OFF THE HORSE AND LET IT GO.
IT WILL BE EASIER TO WANDER ABOUT THE CITY ON FOOT. I COULD PRETEND TO BE A VILLAGER ON A VISIT TO THE CITY.
HE WANDERED THROUGH THE STREETS AND BAZARS...
... AND PASSED THE PALACE.
NOW THAT I KNOW THE LAYOUT OF THE CITY MY MISSION WILL BE EASIER.
TOWARDS EVENING HE MET A STREET-SINGFR. THUGSEN SANG FOR THE OLD MAN AND THEY BECAME FRIENDS.
WHERE ARE YOU STAYING, MY SON?
I AM LOOKING FOR A PLACE, BUT I HAVEN'T FOUND ONE YET.
YOU ARE WELCOME TO SHARE MY HUMBLE HUT.

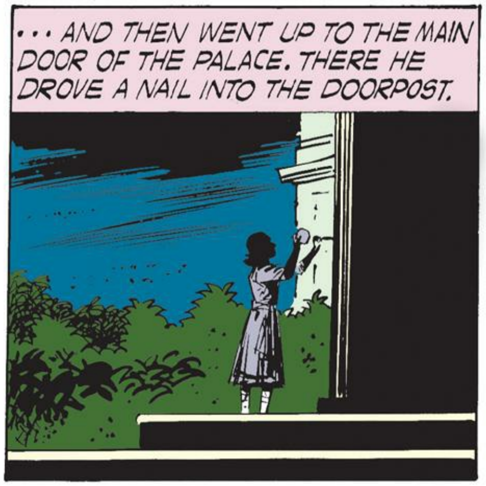

WHEN THEY REACHED THE SINGER'S HUT—
YOU CAN USE THE COT. I WILL SLEEP ON THE FLOOR.
AND WHENEVER YOU FEEL LIKE SINGING, YOU CAN USE MY TANPURA.*
THAT NIGHT, WHEN THE STREET SINGER HAD FALLEN ASLEEP, THUGSEN STOLE OUT...
...REACHED THE PALACE ENTRANCE AND BEGAN TO SING A SOFT, MELODIOUS TUNE.
SO SOOTHING WAS THE SONG THAT ONE BY ONE THE GUARDS FELL ASLEEP.
THUGSEN ENTERED THE PALACE GROUNDS...

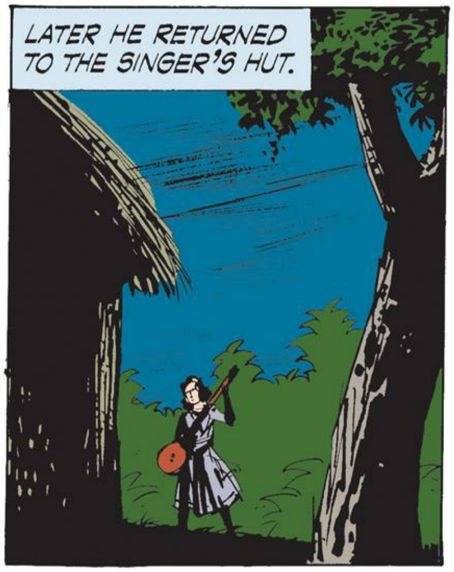
*A MUSICAL INSTRUMENT

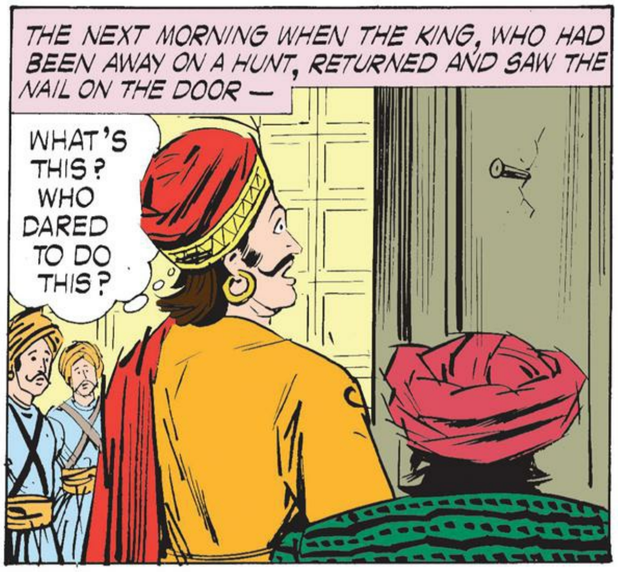

... WALKED INTO THE PALACE ...

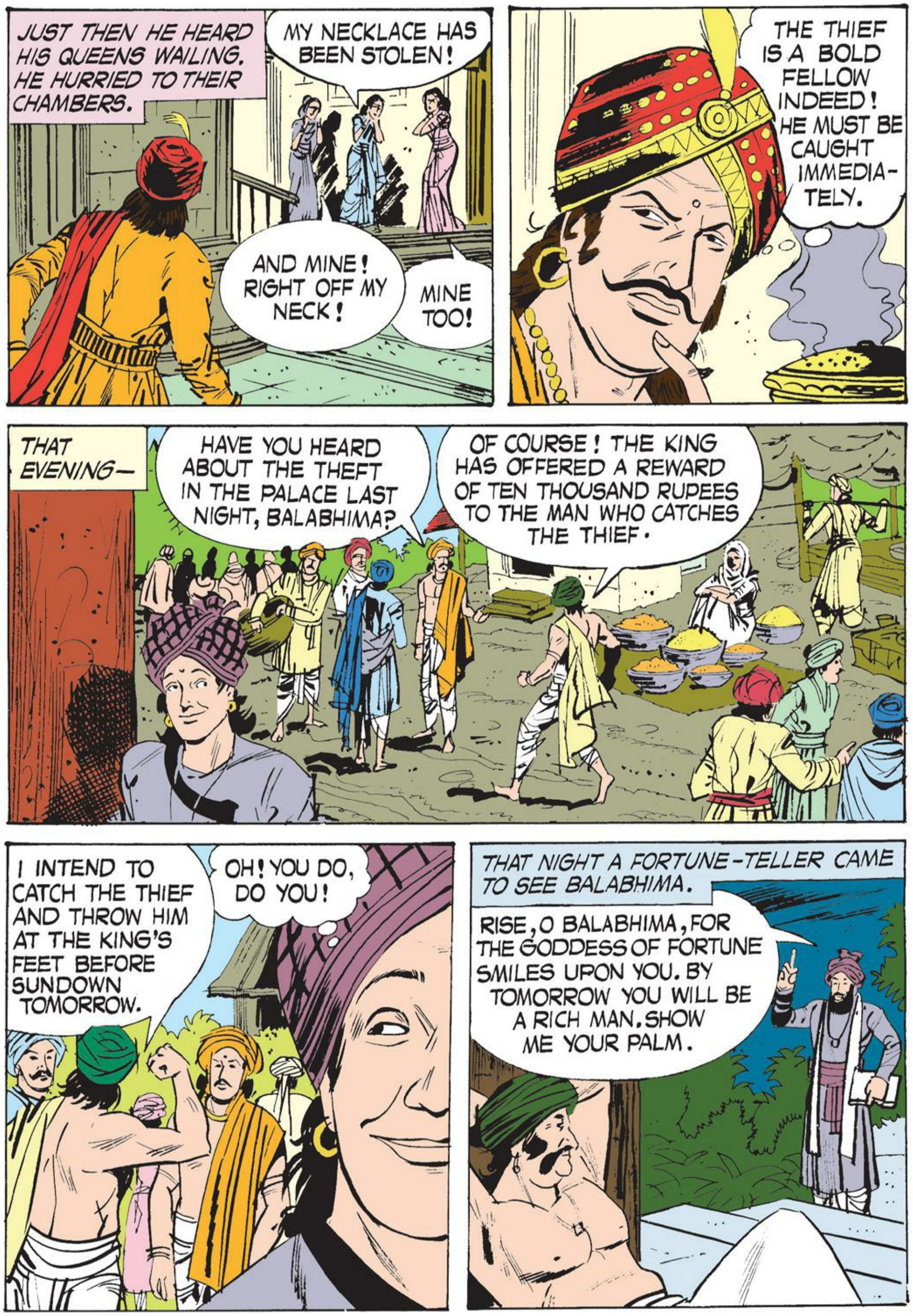

... AND ENTERED THE QUEEN'S CHAMBERS.
SO YOU ARE ONE OF THOSE WHO PLOTTED AGAINST MY MOTHER! YOU WILL SOON PAY FOR IT.

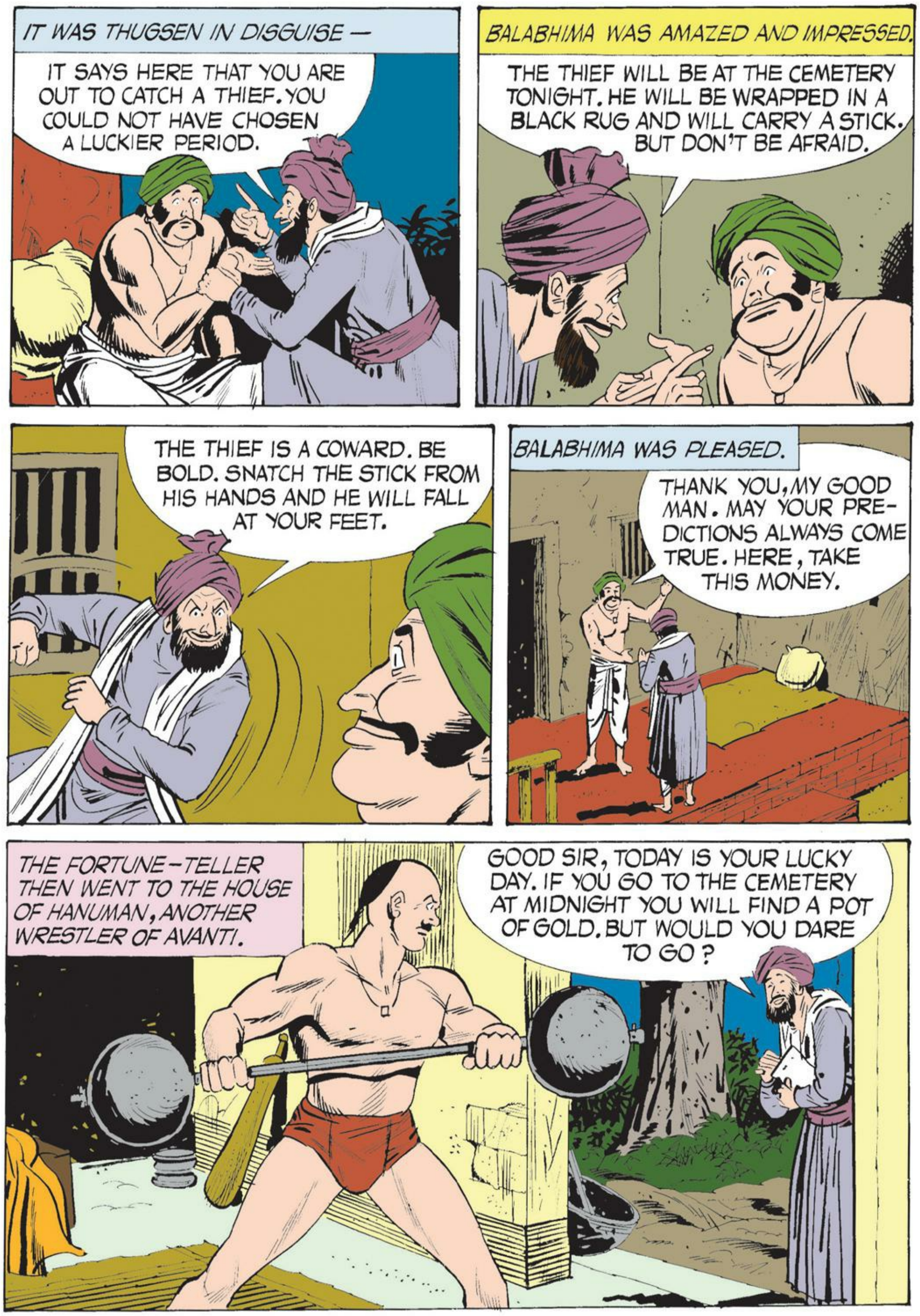

HE REMOVED THE NECKLACES OF THE QUEENS WHO WERE ASLEEP ...

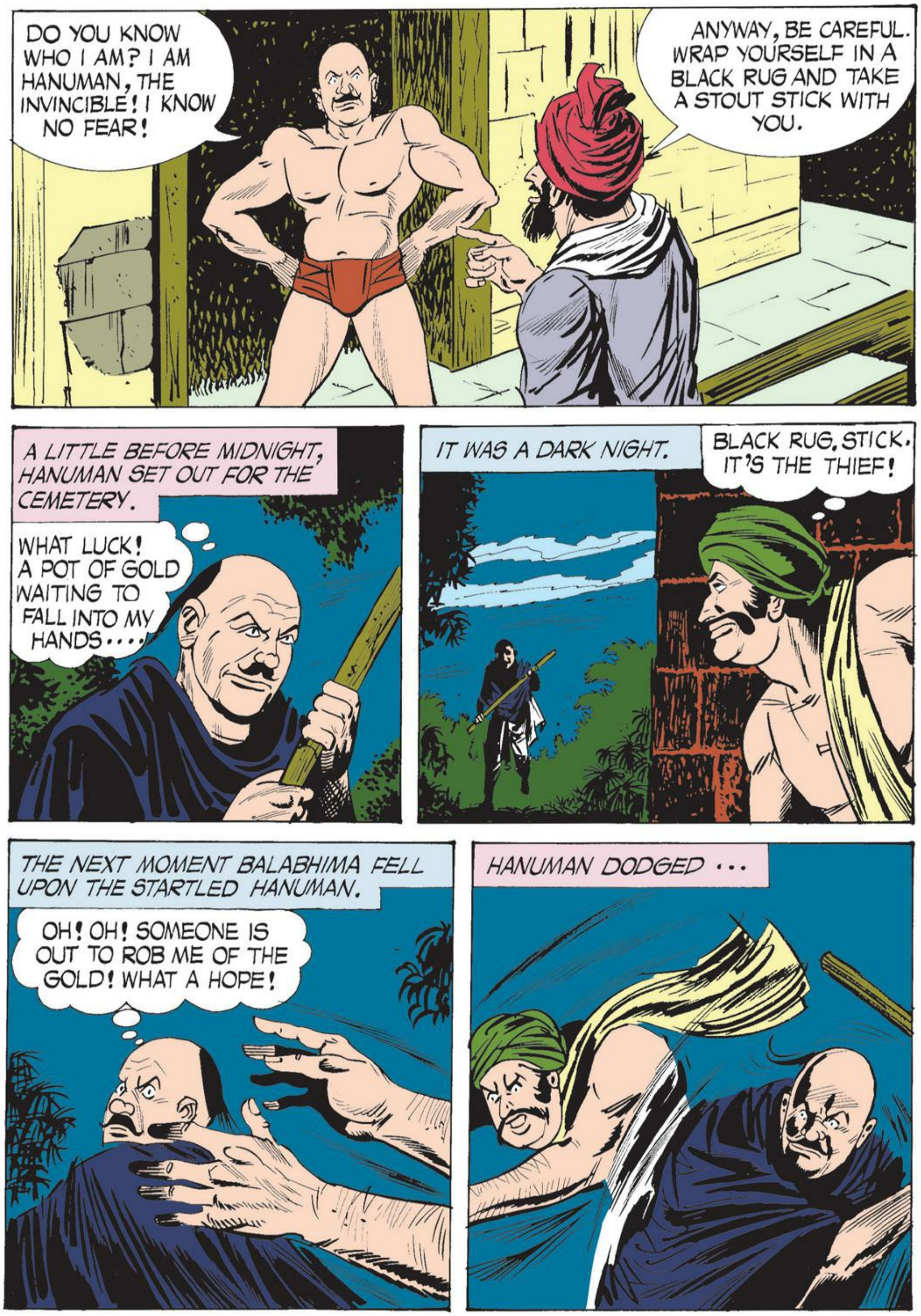

... AND THEN WENT UP TO THE MAIN DOOR OF THE PALACE. THERE HE DROVE A NAIL INTO THE DOORPOST.

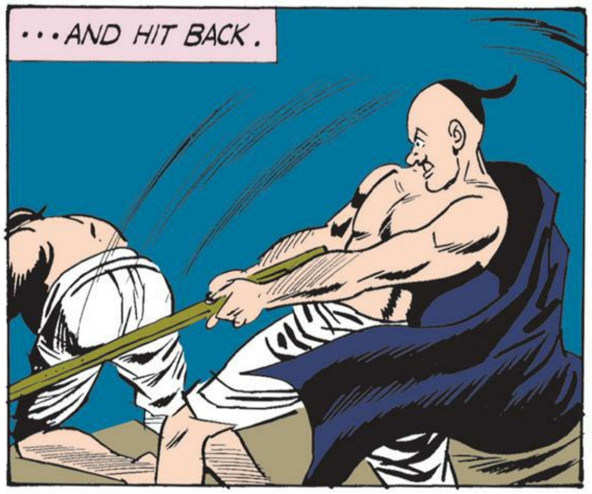

LATER HE RETURNED TO THE SINGER'S HUT.

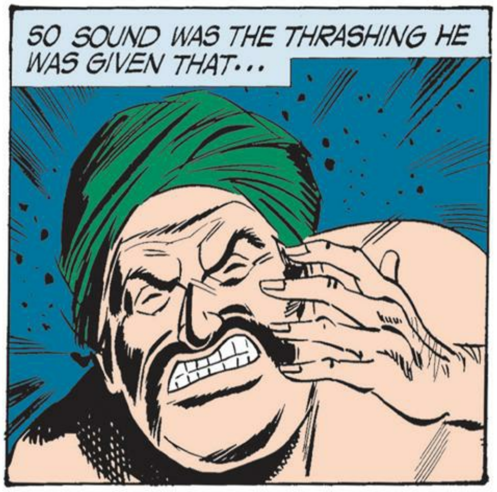

THE NEXT MORNING WHEN THE KING, WHO HAD BEEN AWAY ON A HUNT, RETURNED AND SAW THE NAIL ON THE DOOR —
WHAT'S THIS? WHO DARED TO DO THIS?

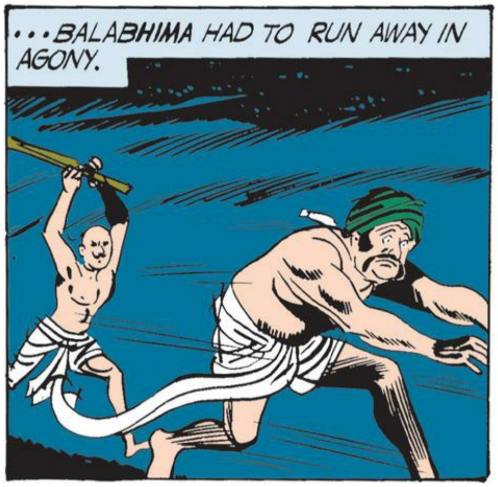

JUST THEN HE HEARD HIS QUEENS WAILING. HE HURRIED TO THEIR CHAMBERS.
MY NECKLACE HAS BEEN STOLEN!
AND MINE! RIGHT OFF MY NECK!
MINE TOO!
THE THIEF IS A BOLD FELLOW INDEED! HE MUST BE CAUGHT IMMEDIATELY.
THAT EVENING—
HAVE YOU HEARD ABOUT THE THEFT IN THE PALACE LAST NIGHT, BALABHIMA?
OF COURSE! THE KING HAS OFFERED A REWARD OF TEN THOUSAND RUPEES TO THE MAN WHO CATCHES THE THIEF.
I INTEND TO CATCH THE THIEF AND THROW HIM AT THE KING'S FEET BEFORE SUNDOWN TOMORROW.
OH! YOU DO, DO YOU!
THAT NIGHT A FORTUNE-TELLER CAME TO SEE BALABHIMA.
RISE, O BALABHIMA, FOR THE GODDESS OF FORTUNE SMILES UPON YOU. BY TOMORROW YOU WILL BE A RICH MAN. SHOW ME YOUR PALM.

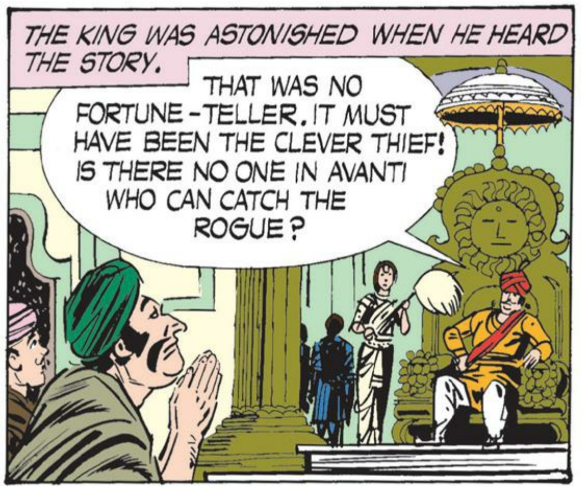

IT WAS THUGSEN IN DISGUISE —
IT SAYS HERE THAT YOU ARE OUT TO CATCH A THIEF. YOU COULD NOT HAVE CHOSEN A LUCKIER PERIOD.
BALABHIMA WAS AMAZED AND IMPRESSED.
THE THIEF WILL BE AT THE CEMETERY TONIGHT. HE WILL BE WRAPPED IN A BLACK RUG AND WILL CARRY A STICK. BUT DON'T BE AFRAID.
THE THIEF IS A COWARD. BE BOLD. SNATCH THE STICK FROM HIS HANDS AND HE WILL FALL AT YOUR FEET.
BALABHIMA WAS PLEASED.
THANK YOU, MY GOOD MAN. MAY YOUR PREDICTIONS ALWAYS COME TRUE. HERE, TAKE THIS MONEY.
THE FORTUNE-TELLER THEN WENT TO THE HOUSE OF HANUMAN, ANOTHER WRESTLER OF AVANTI.
GOOD SIR, TODAY IS YOUR LUCKY DAY. IF YOU GO TO THE CEMETERY AT MIDNIGHT YOU WILL FIND A POT OF GOLD. BUT WOULD YOU DARE TO GO?

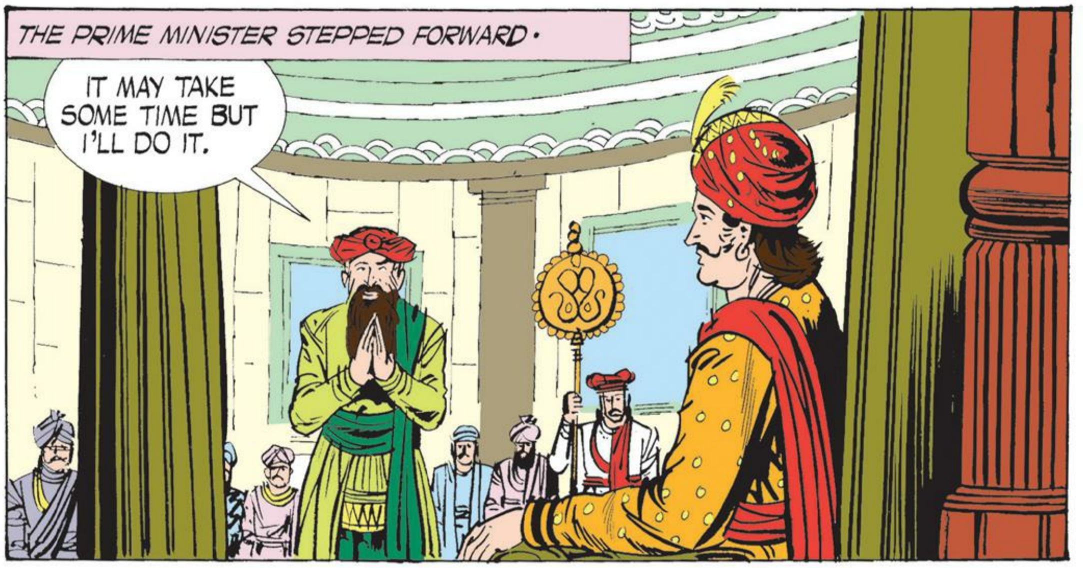

DO YOU KNOW WHO I AM? I AM HANUMAN, THE INVINCIBLE! I KNOW NO FEAR!
ANYWAY, BE CAREFUL. WRAP YOURSELF IN A BLACK RUG AND TAKE A STOUT STICK WITH YOU.
A LITTLE BEFORE MIDNIGHT, HANUMAN SET OUT FOR THE CEMETERY.
WHAT LUCK! A POT OF GOLD WAITING TO FALL INTO MY HANDS....
IT WAS A DARK NIGHT.
BLACK RUG, STICK. IT'S THE THIEF!
THE NEXT MOMENT BALABHIMA FELL UPON THE STARTLED HANUMAN.
OH! OH! SOMEONE IS OUT TO ROB ME OF THE GOLD! WHAT A HOPE!
HANUMAN DODGED ...

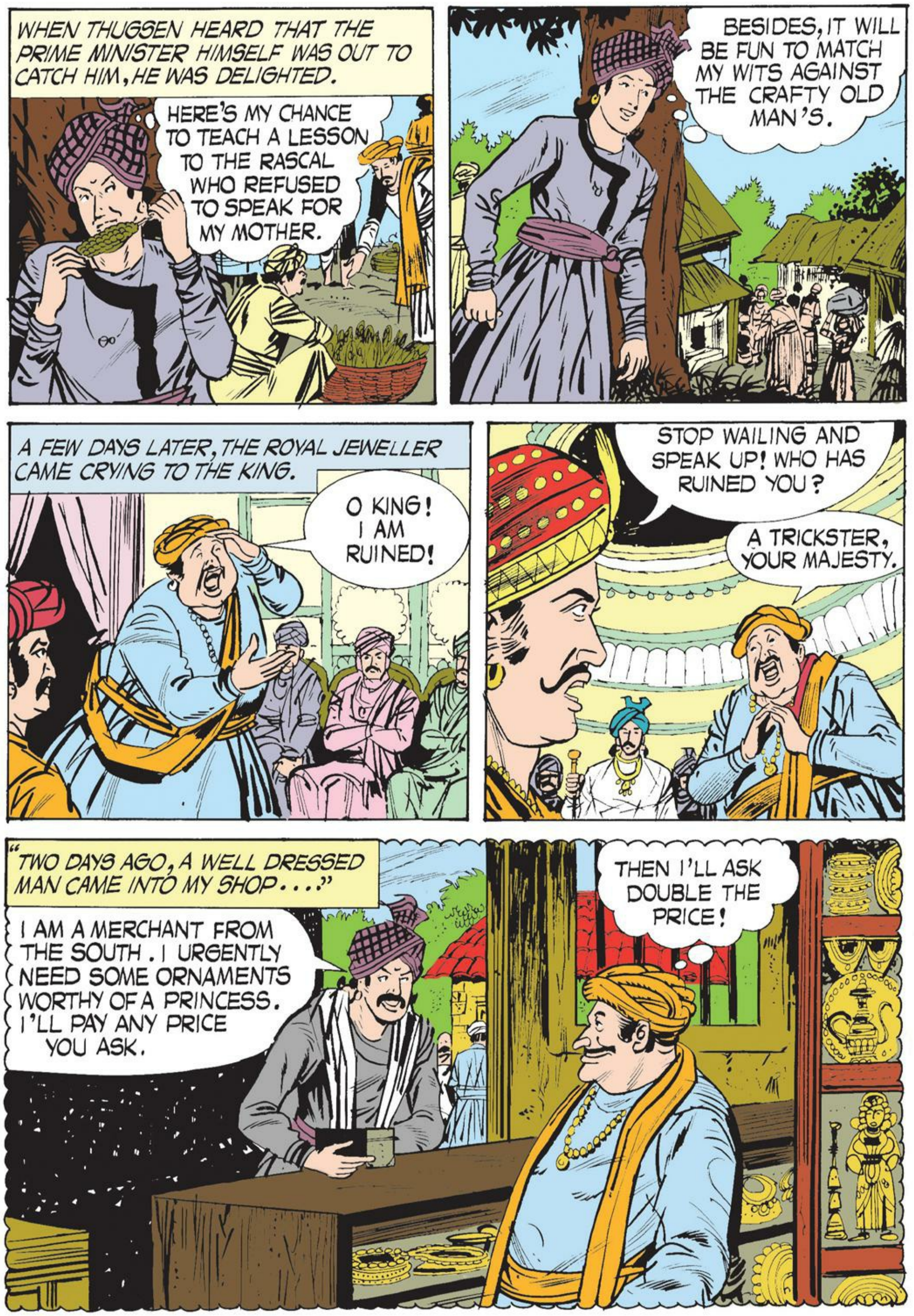

...AND HIT BACK.

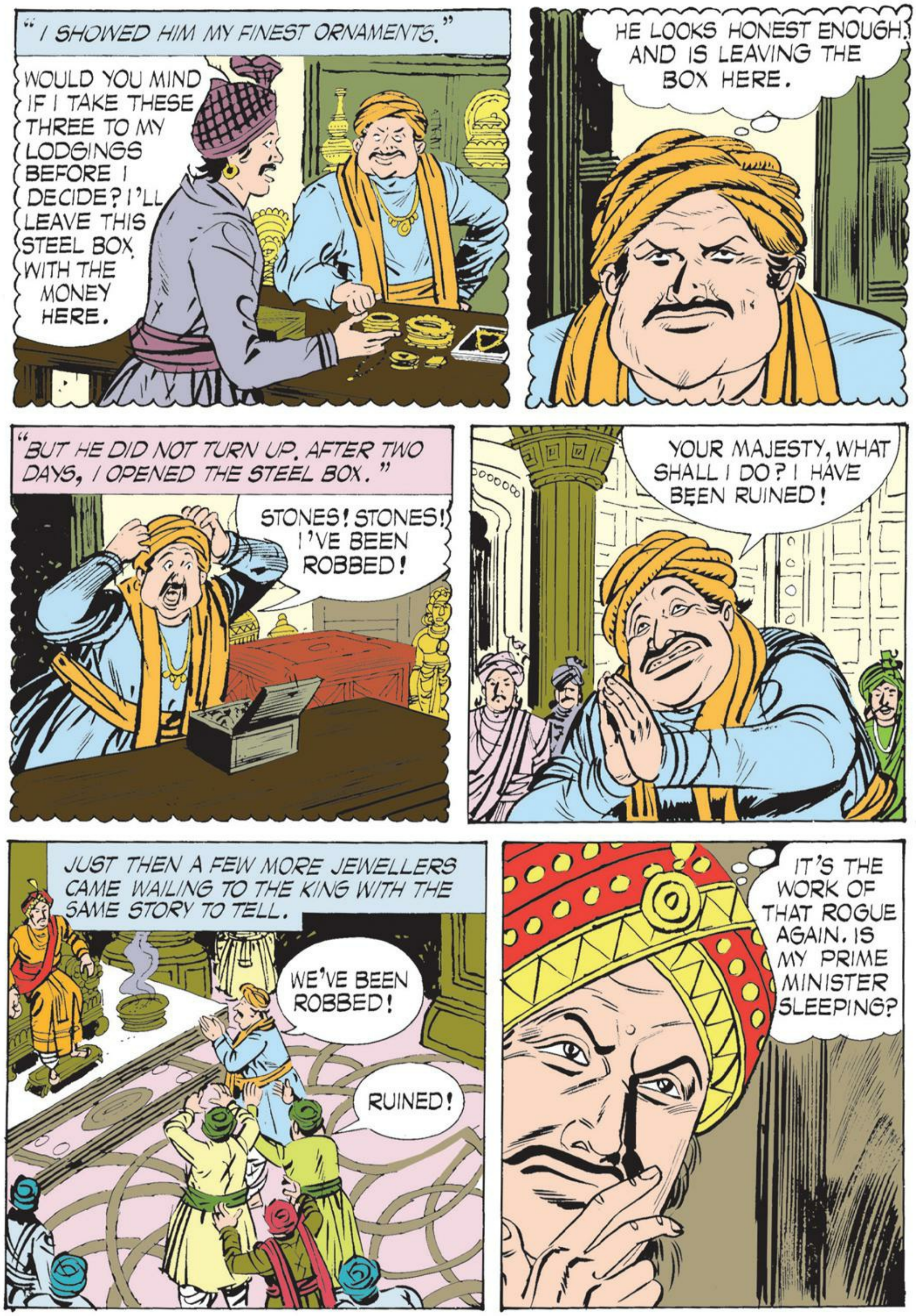

SO SOUND WAS THE THRASHING HE WAS GIVEN THAT...

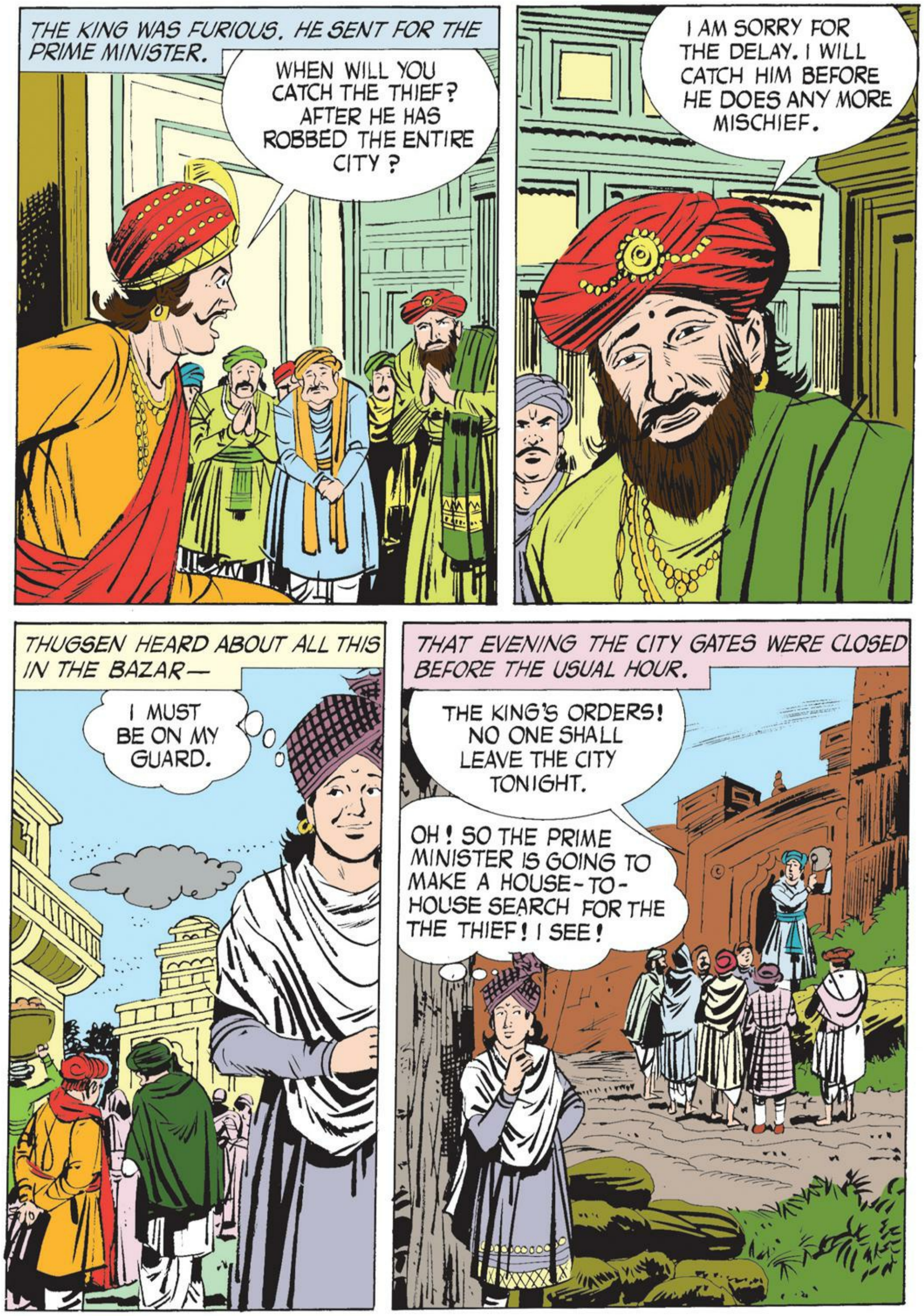

...BALABHIMA HAD TO RUN AWAY IN AGONY.

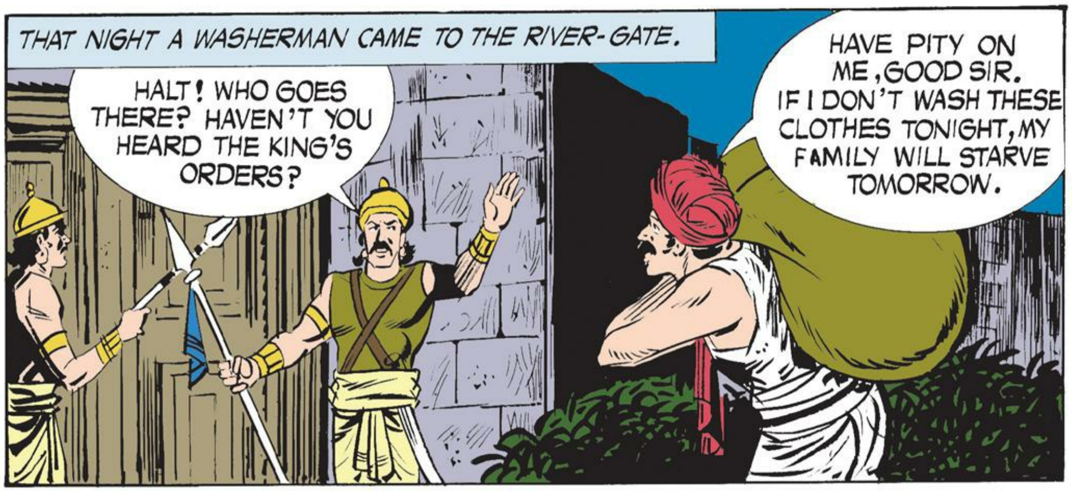

THE KING WAS ASTONISHED WHEN HE HEARD THE STORY.
THAT WAS NO FORTUNE-TELLER. IT MUST HAVE BEEN THE CLEVER THIEF! IS THERE NO ONE IN AVANTI WHO CAN CATCH THE ROGUE?

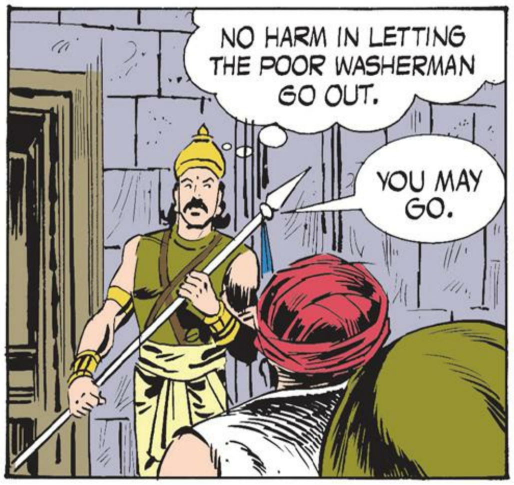

THE PRIME MINISTER STEPPED FORWARD.
IT MAY TAKE SOME TIME BUT I'LL DO IT.

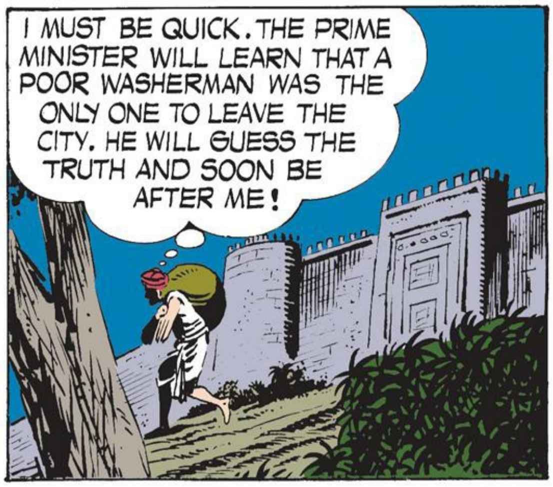

WHEN THUGSEN HEARD THAT THE PRIME MINISTER HIMSELF WAS OUT TO CATCH HIM, HE WAS DELIGHTED.
HERE'S MY CHANCE TO TEACH A LESSON TO THE RASCAL WHO REFUSED TO SPEAK FOR MY MOTHER.
BESIDES, IT WILL BE FUN TO MATCH MY WITS AGAINST THE CRAFTY OLD MAN'S.
A FEW DAYS LATER, THE ROYAL JEWELLER CAME CRYING TO THE KING.
O KING! I AM RUINED!
STOP WAILING AND SPEAK UP! WHO HAS RUINED YOU?
A TRICKSTER, YOUR MAJESTY.
"TWO DAYS AGO, A WELL DRESSED MAN CAME INTO MY SHOP..."
I AM A MERCHANT FROM THE SOUTH. I URGENTLY NEED SOME ORNAMENTS WORTHY OF A PRINCESS. I'LL PAY ANY PRICE YOU ASK.
THEN I'LL ASK DOUBLE THE PRICE!

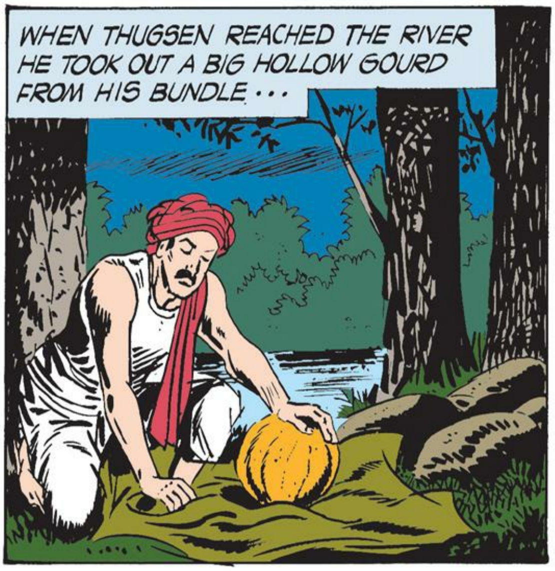

"I SHOWED HIM MY FINEST ORNAMENTS."
WOULD YOU MIND IF I TAKE THESE THREE TO MY LODGINGS BEFORE I DECIDE? I'LL LEAVE THIS STEEL BOX WITH THE MONEY HERE.
HE LOOKS HONEST ENOUGH, AND IS LEAVING THE BOX HERE.
"BUT HE DID NOT TURN UP. AFTER TWO DAYS, I OPENED THE STEEL BOX."
STONES! STONES! I'VE BEEN ROBBED!
YOUR MAJESTY, WHAT SHALL I DO? I HAVE BEEN RUINED!
JUST THEN A FEW MORE JEWELLERS CAME WAILING TO THE KING WITH THE SAME STORY TO TELL.
WE'VE BEEN ROBBED!
RUINED!
IT'S THE WORK OF THAT ROGUE AGAIN. IS MY PRIME MINISTER SLEEPING?

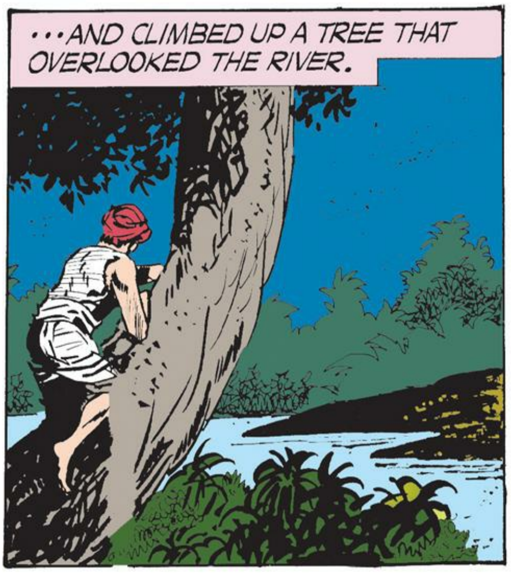

THE KING WAS FURIOUS. HE SENT FOR THE PRIME MINISTER.
WHEN WILL YOU CATCH THE THIEF? AFTER HE HAS ROBBED THE ENTIRE CITY?
I AM SORRY FOR THE DELAY. I WILL CATCH HIM BEFORE HE DOES ANY MORE MISCHIEF.
THUGSEN HEARD ABOUT ALL THIS IN THE BAZAR—
I MUST BE ON MY GUARD.
THAT EVENING THE CITY GATES WERE CLOSED BEFORE THE USUAL HOUR.
THE KING'S ORDERS! NO ONE SHALL LEAVE THE CITY TONIGHT.
OH! SO THE PRIME MINISTER IS GOING TO MAKE A HOUSE-TO-HOUSE SEARCH FOR THE THE THIEF! I SEE!

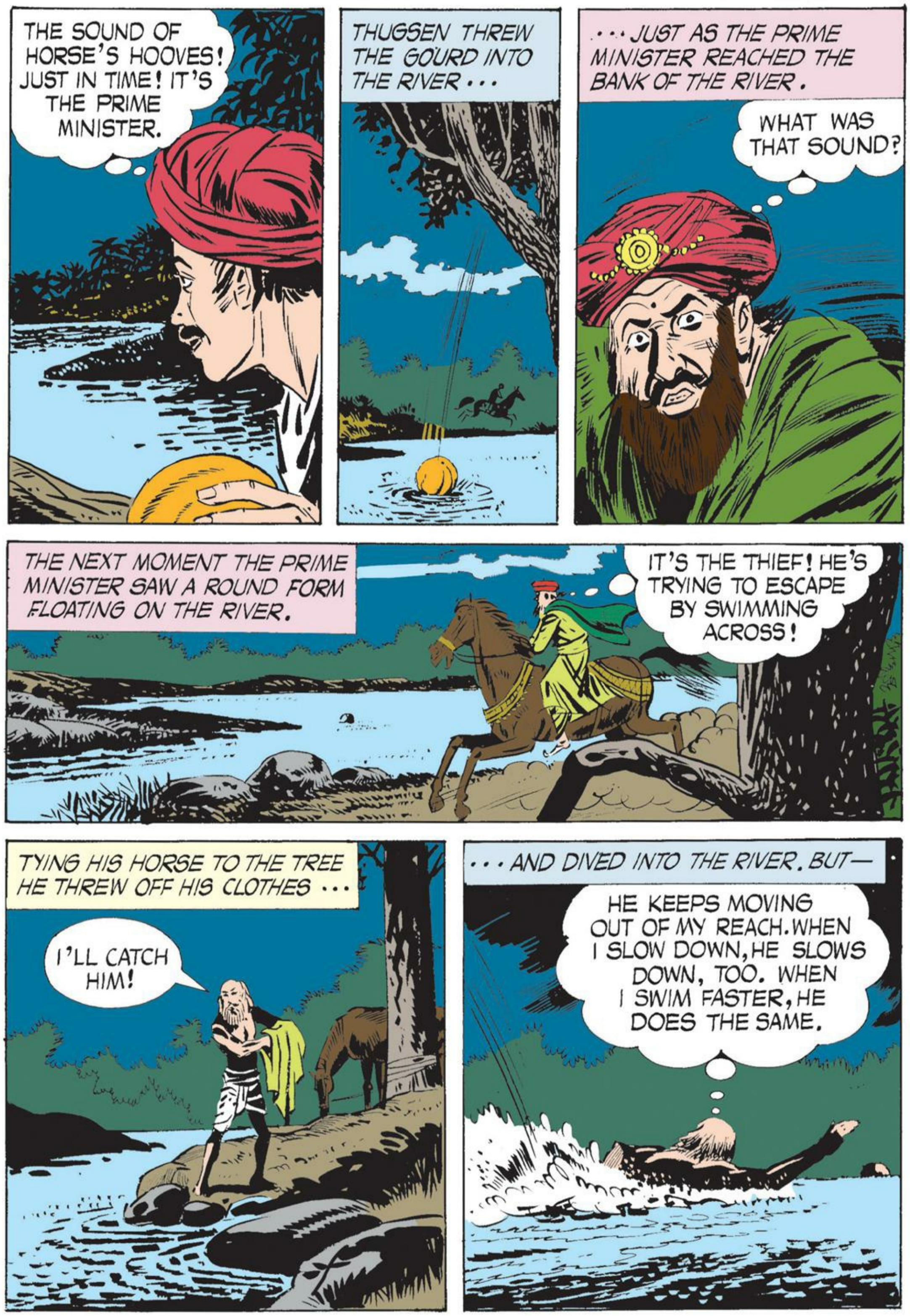

THAT NIGHT A WASHERMAN CAME TO THE RIVER-GATE.
HALT! WHO GOES THERE? HAVEN'T YOU HEARD THE KING'S ORDERS?
HAVE PITY ON ME, GOOD SIR. IF I DON'T WASH THESE CLOTHES TONIGHT, MY FAMILY WILL STARVE TOMORROW.

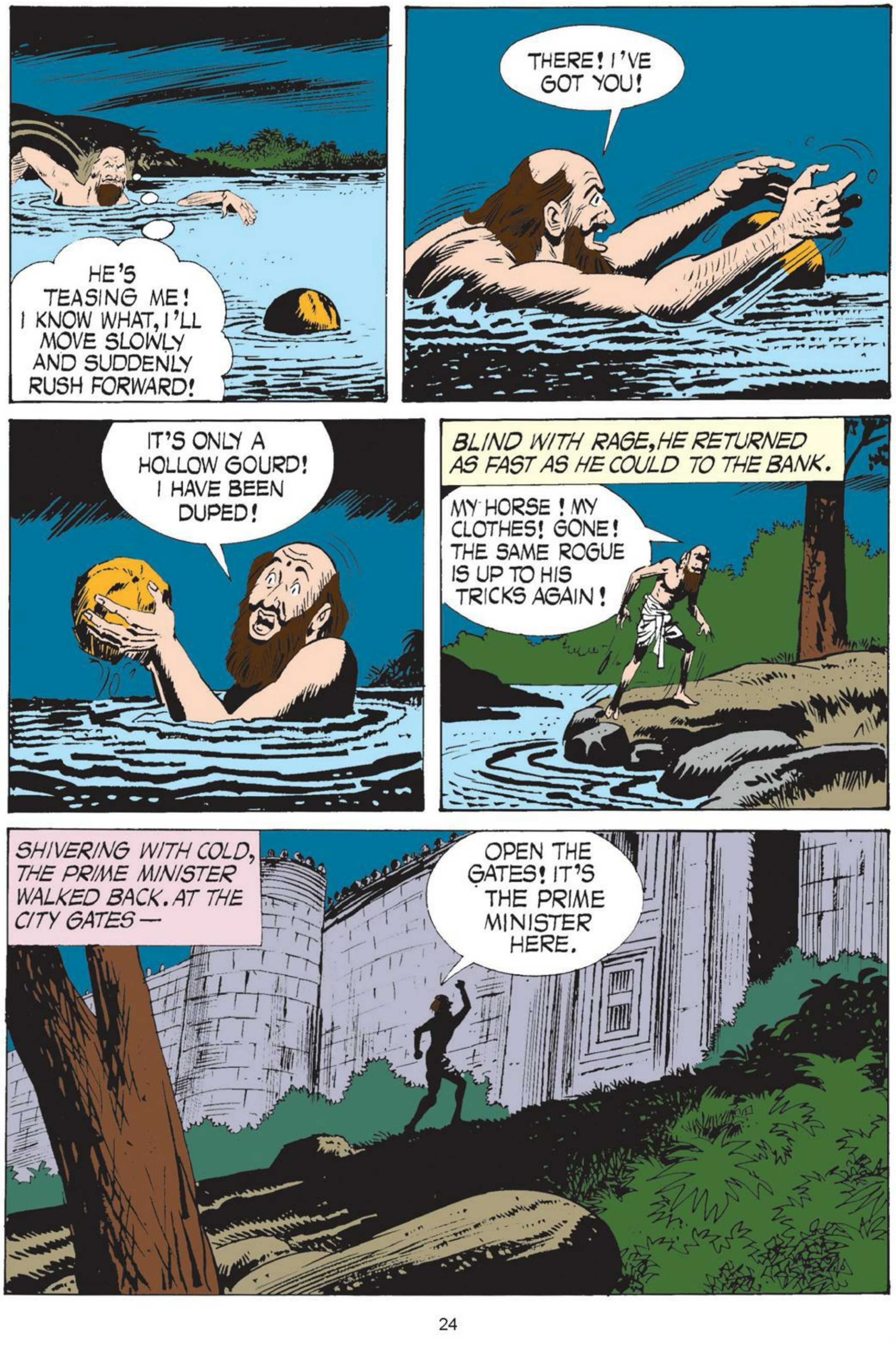

NO HARM IN LETTING THE POOR WASHERMAN GO OUT.
YOU MAY GO.

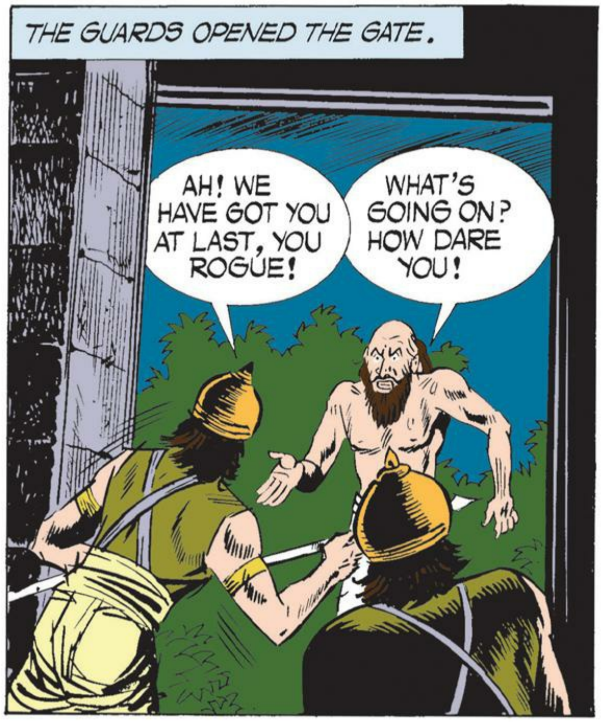

I MUST BE QUICK. THE PRIME MINISTER WILL LEARN THAT A POOR WASHERMAN WAS THE ONLY ONE TO LEAVE THE CITY. HE WILL GUESS THE TRUTH AND SOON BE AFTER ME!

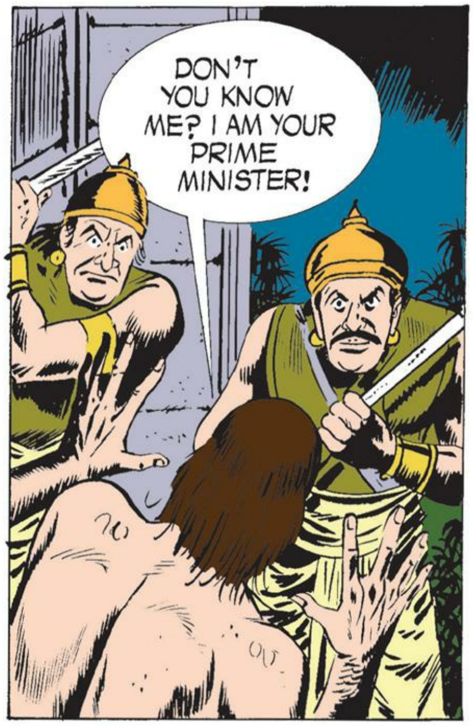

WHEN THUGSEN REACHED THE RIVER HE TOOK OUT A BIG HOLLOW GOURD FROM HIS BUNDLE ...

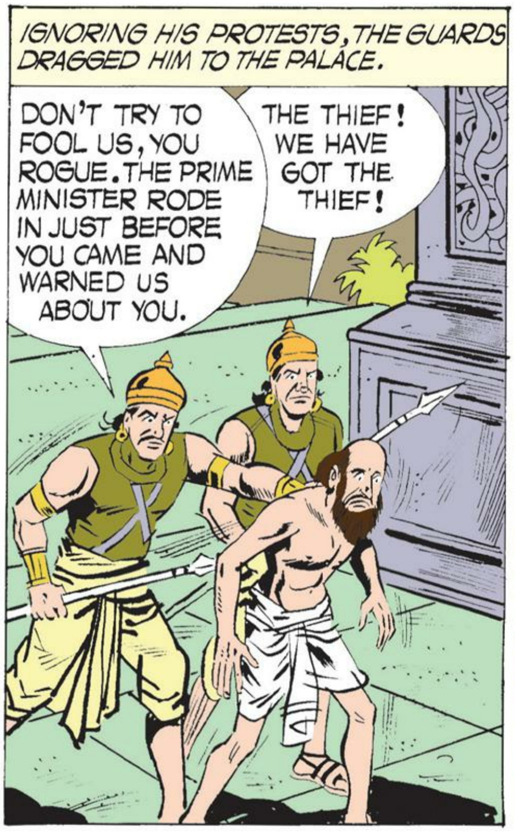

...AND CLIMBED UP A TREE THAT OVERLOOKED THE RIVER.

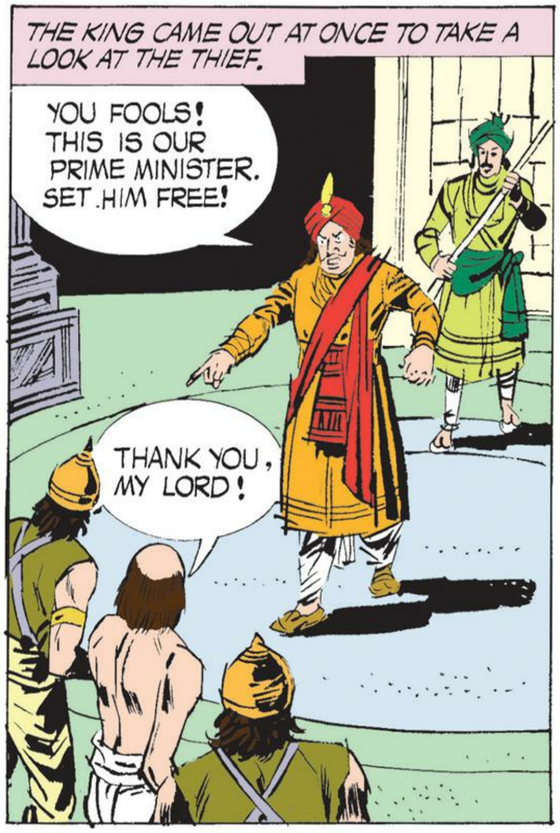

THE SOUND OF HORSE'S HOOVES! JUST IN TIME! IT'S THE PRIME MINISTER.
THUGSEN THREW THE GOURD INTO THE RIVER ...
... JUST AS THE PRIME MINISTER REACHED THE BANK OF THE RIVER.
WHAT WAS THAT SOUND?
THE NEXT MOMENT THE PRIME MINISTER SAW A ROUND FORM FLOATING ON THE RIVER.
IT'S THE THIEF! HE'S TRYING TO ESCAPE BY SWIMMING ACROSS!
TYING HIS HORSE TO THE TREE HE THREW OFF HIS CLOTHES ...
I'LL CATCH HIM!
... AND DIVED INTO THE RIVER. BUT—
HE KEEPS MOVING OUT OF MY REACH. WHEN I SLOW DOWN, HE SLOWS DOWN, TOO. WHEN I SWIM FASTER, HE DOES THE SAME.

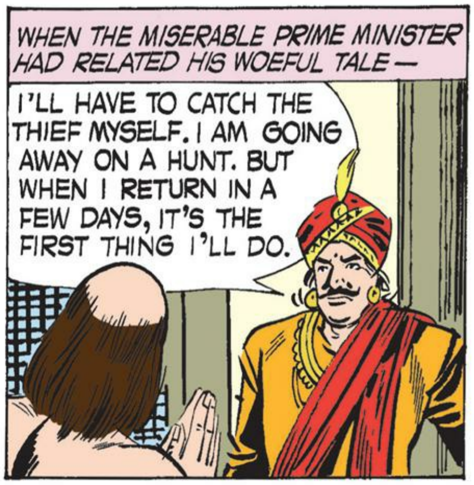

HE'S TEASING ME! I KNOW WHAT, I'LL MOVE SLOWLY AND SUDDENLY RUSH FORWARD!
THERE! I'VE GOT YOU!
IT'S ONLY A HOLLOW GOURD! I HAVE BEEN DUPED!
BLIND WITH RAGE, HE RETURNED AS FAST AS HE COULD TO THE BANK.
MY HORSE! MY CLOTHES! GONE! THE SAME ROGUE IS UP TO HIS TRICKS AGAIN!
SHIVERING WITH COLD, THE PRIME MINISTER WALKED BACK. AT THE CITY GATES —
OPEN THE GATES! IT'S THE PRIME MINISTER HERE.

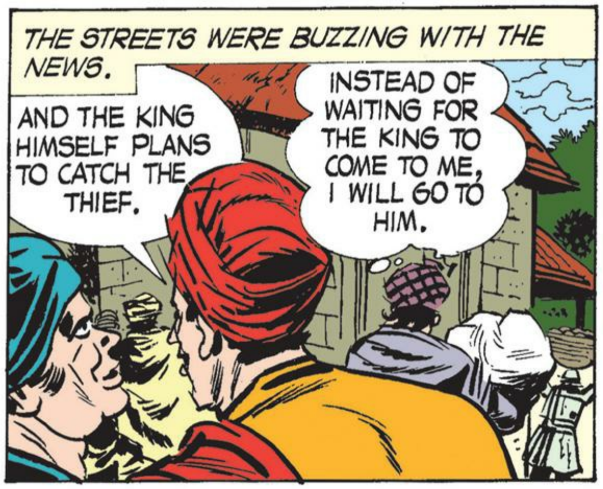

THE GUARDS OPENED THE GATE.
AH! WE HAVE GOT YOU AT LAST, YOU ROGUE!
WHAT'S GOING ON? HOW DARE YOU!

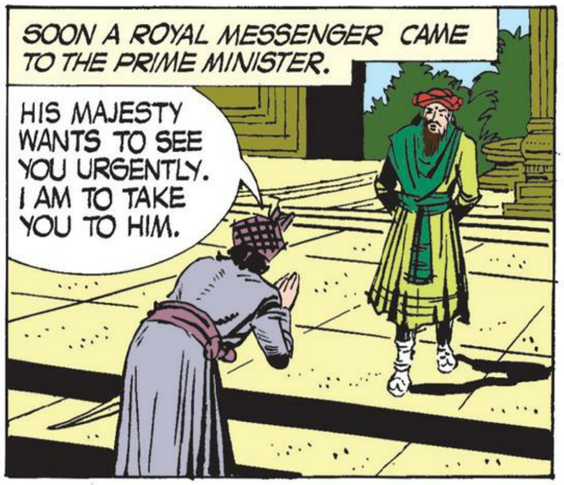

DON'T YOU KNOW ME? I AM YOUR PRIME MINISTER!

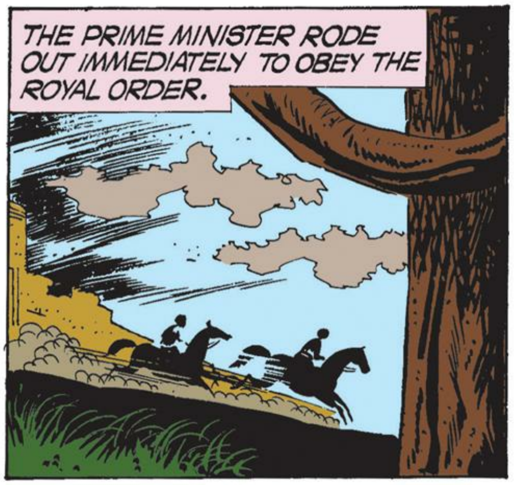

IGNORING HIS PROTESTS, THE GUARDS DRAGGED HIM TO THE PALACE.
DON'T TRY TO FOOL US, YOU ROGUE. THE PRIME MINISTER RODE IN JUST BEFORE YOU CAME AND WARNED US ABOUT YOU.
THE THIEF! WE HAVE GOT THE THIEF!

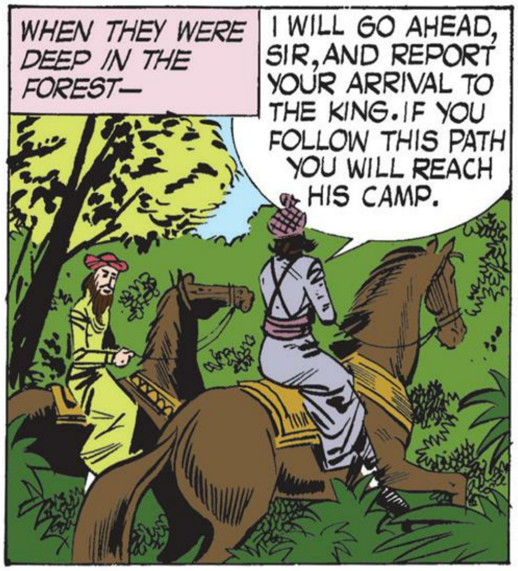

THE KING CAME OUT AT ONCE TO TAKE A LOOK AT THE THIEF.
YOU FOOLS! THIS IS OUR PRIME MINISTER. SET HIM FREE!
THANK YOU, MY LORD!

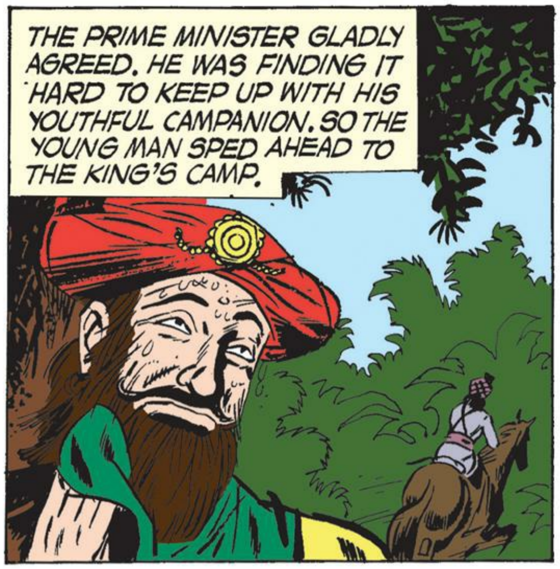

WHEN THE MISERABLE PRIME MINISTER HAD RELATED HIS WOEFUL TALE—
I'LL HAVE TO CATCH THE THIEF MYSELF. I AM GOING AWAY ON A HUNT. BUT WHEN I RETURN IN A FEW DAYS, IT'S THE FIRST THING I'LL DO.

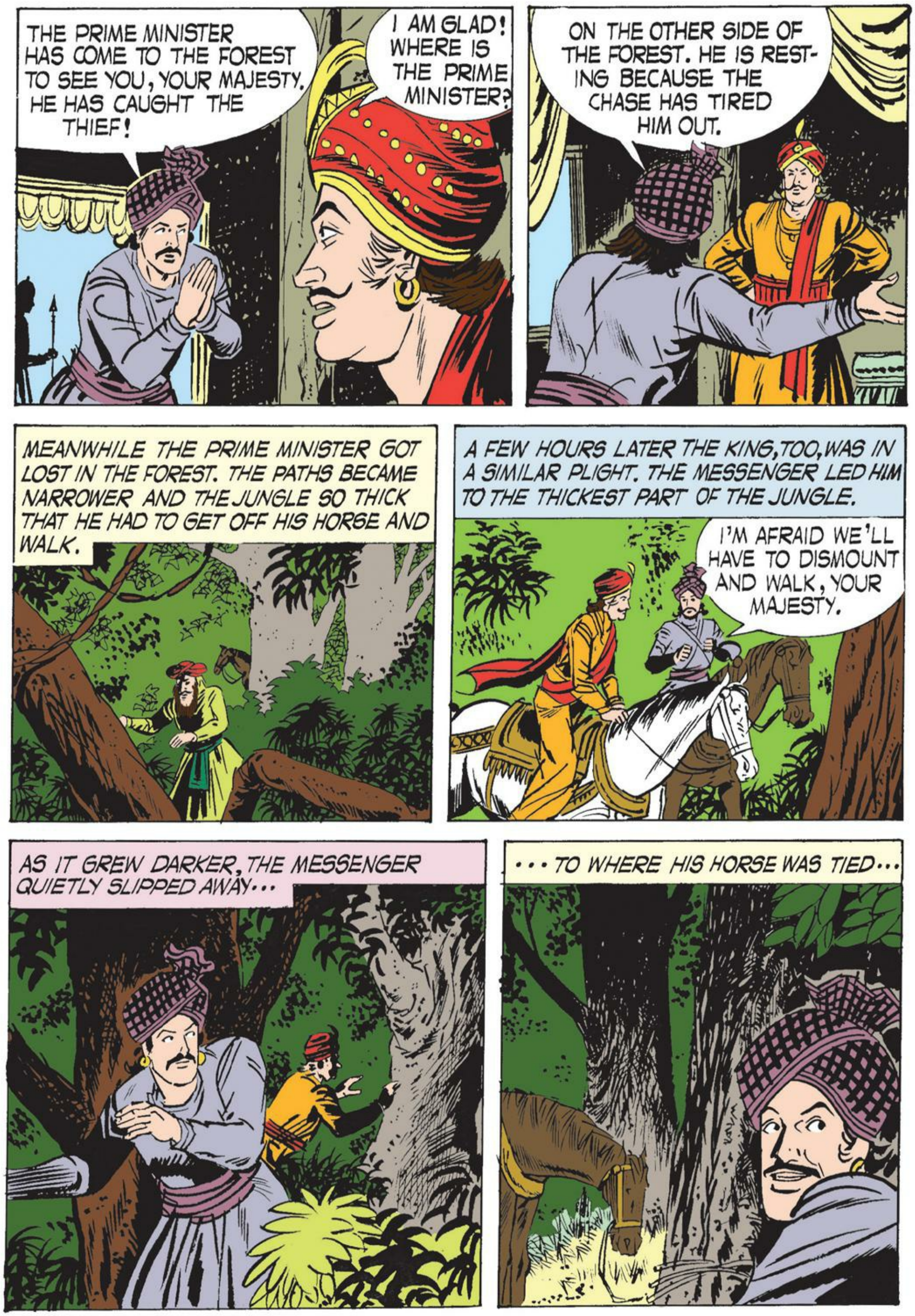

THE STREETS WERE BUZZING WITH THE NEWS.
AND THE KING HIMSELF PLANS TO CATCH THE THIEF.
INSTEAD OF WAITING FOR THE KING TO COME TO ME, I WILL GO TO HIM.

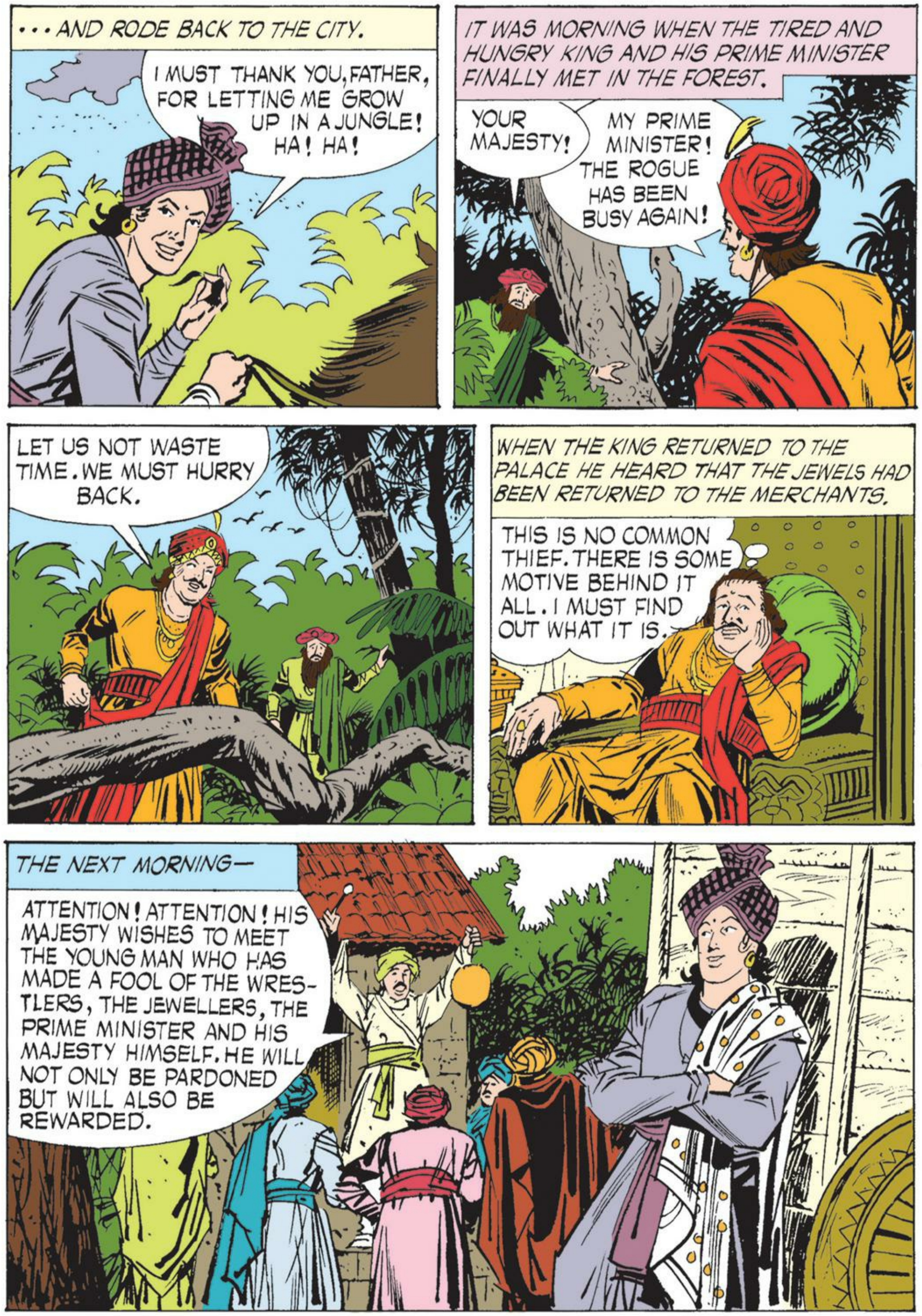

SOON A ROYAL MESSENGER CAME TO THE PRIME MINISTER.
HIS MAJESTY WANTS TO SEE YOU URGENTLY. I AM TO TAKE YOU TO HIM.

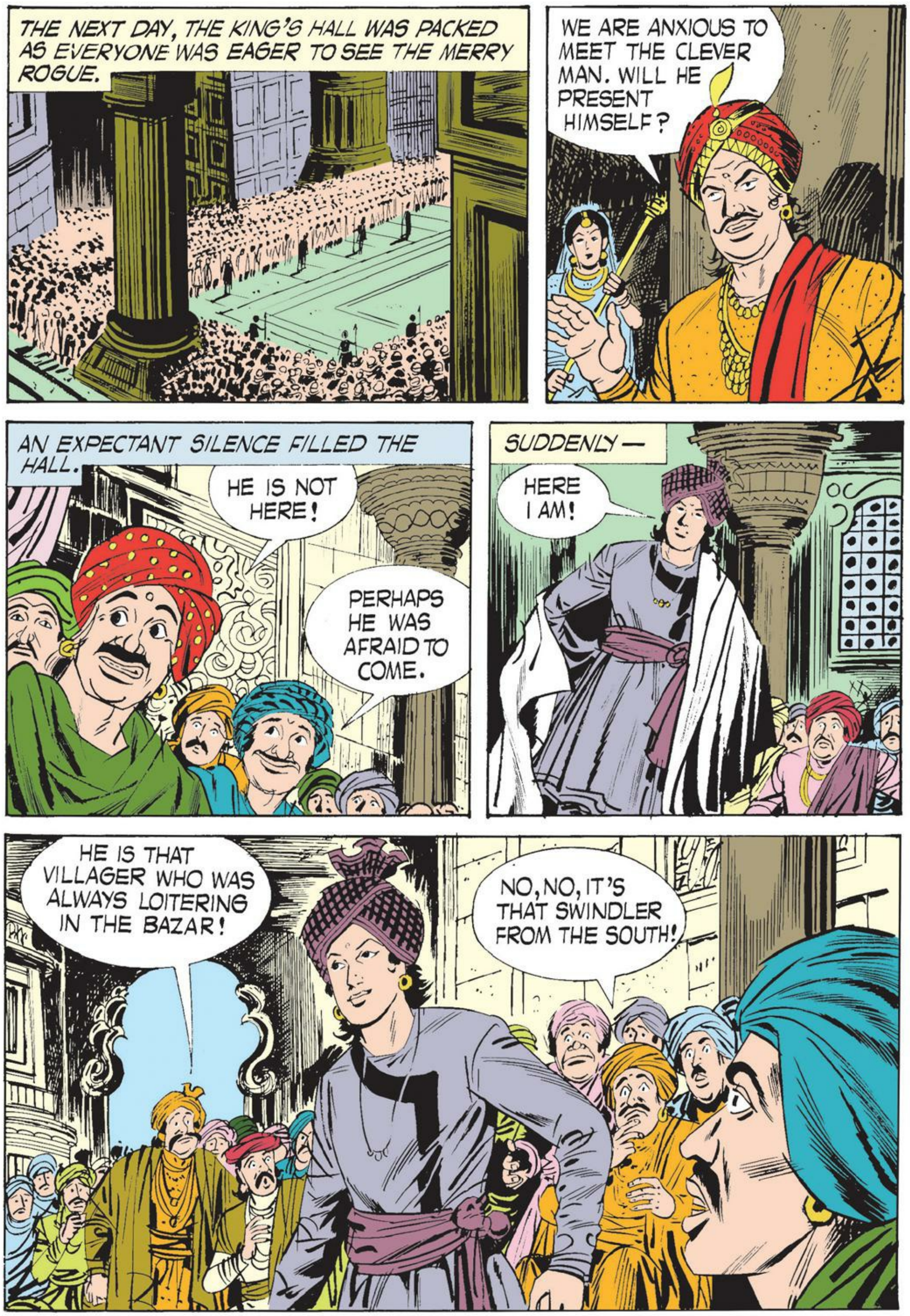

THE PRIME MINISTER RODE OUT IMMEDIATELY TO OBEY THE ROYAL ORDER.

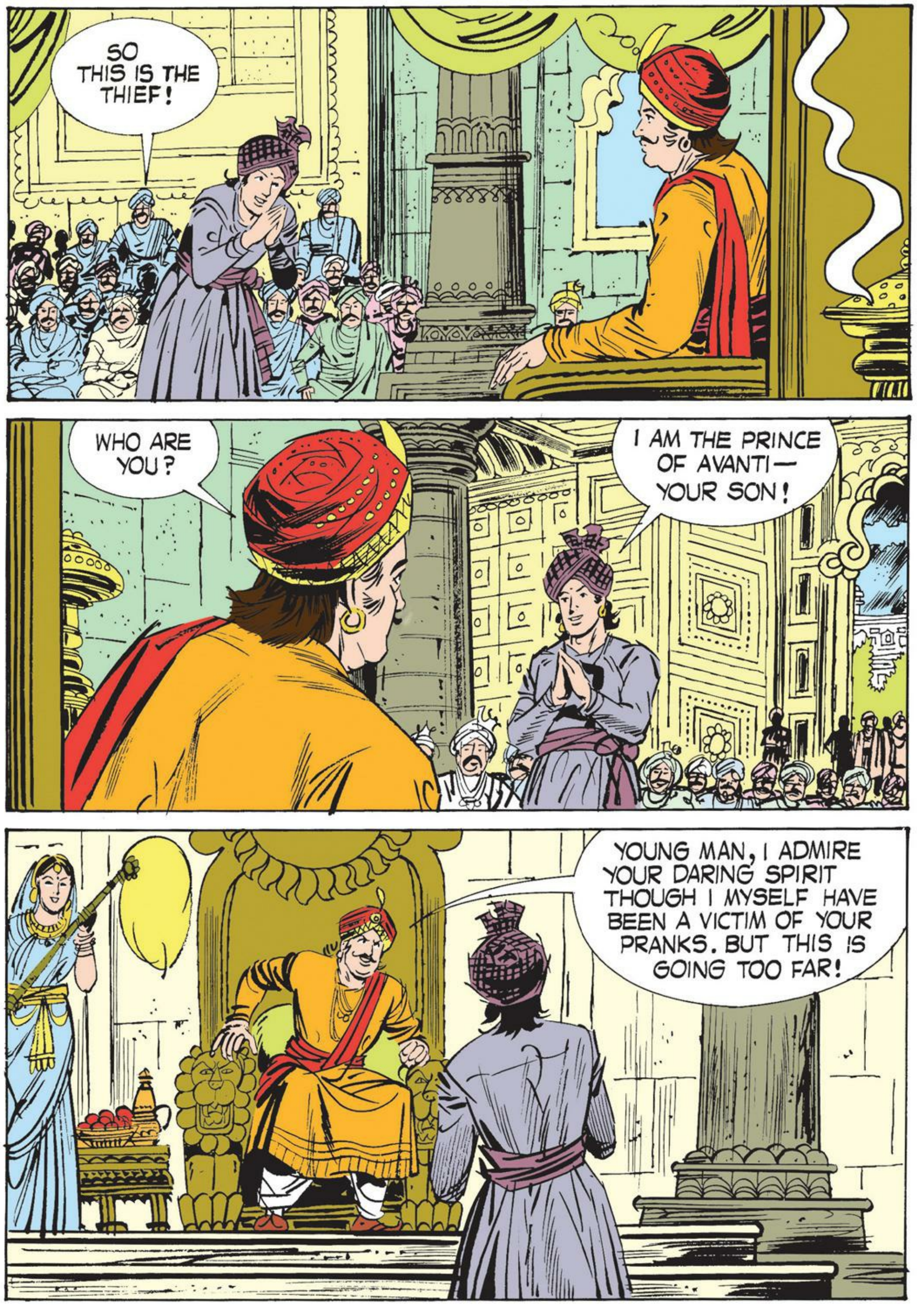

WHEN THEY WERE DEEP IN THE FOREST—
I WILL GO AHEAD, SIR, AND REPORT YOUR ARRIVAL TO THE KING. IF YOU FOLLOW THIS PATH YOU WILL REACH HIS CAMP.

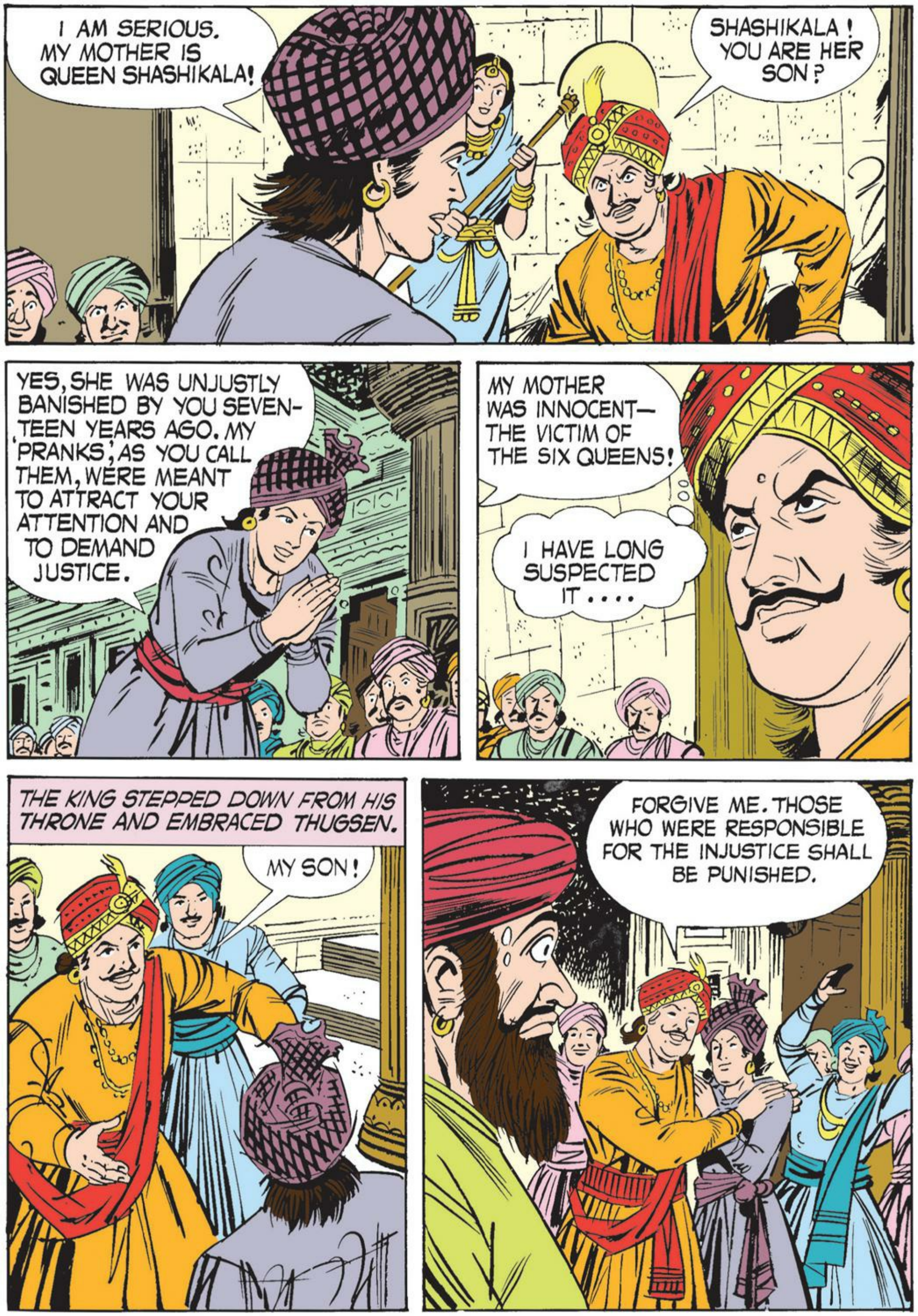

THE PRIME MINISTER GLADLY AGREED. HE WAS FINDING IT HARD TO KEEP UP WITH HIS YOUTHFUL CAMPANION. SO THE YOUNG MAN SPED AHEAD TO THE KING'S CAMP.

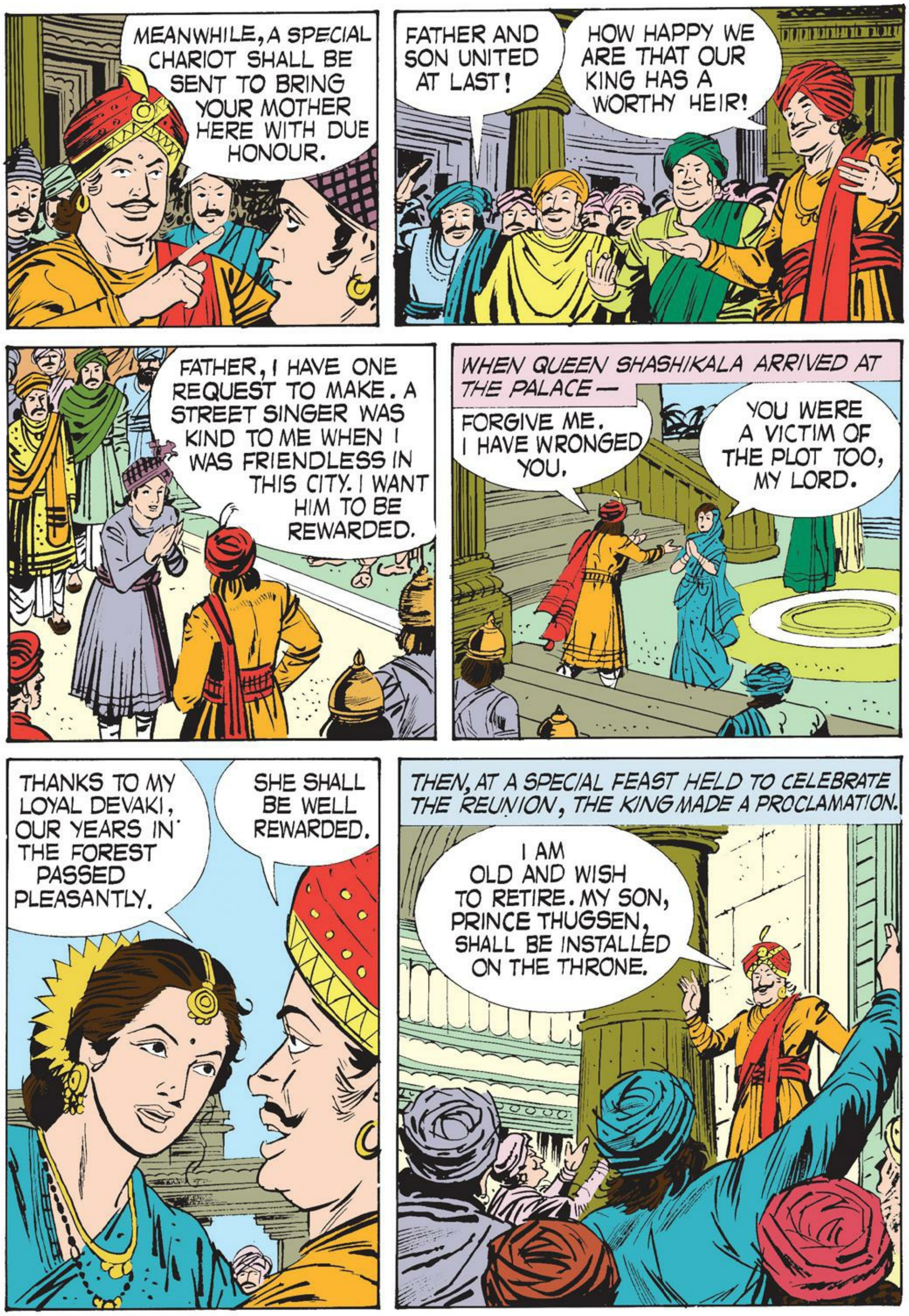

THE PRIME MINISTER HAS COME TO THE FOREST TO SEE YOU, YOUR MAJESTY. HE HAS CAUGHT THE THIEF!
I AM GLAD! WHERE IS THE PRIME MINISTER?
ON THE OTHER SIDE OF THE FOREST. HE IS RESTING BECAUSE THE CHASE HAS TIRED HIM OUT.
MEANWHILE THE PRIME MINISTER GOT LOST IN THE FOREST. THE PATHS BECAME NARROWER AND THE JUNGLE SO THICK THAT HE HAD TO GET OFF HIS HORSE AND WALK.
A FEW HOURS LATER THE KING, TOO, WAS IN A SIMILAR PLIGHT. THE MESSENGER LED HIM TO THE THICKEST PART OF THE JUNGLE.
I'M AFRAID WE'LL HAVE TO DISMOUNT AND WALK, YOUR MAJESTY.
AS IT GREW DARKER, THE MESSENGER QUIETLY SLIPPED AWAY...
...TO WHERE HIS HORSE WAS TIED...


... AND RODE BACK TO THE CITY.
I MUST THANK YOU, FATHER, FOR LETTING ME GROW UP IN A JUNGLE! HA! HA!
IT WAS MORNING WHEN THE TIRED AND HUNGRY KING AND HIS PRIME MINISTER FINALLY MET IN THE FOREST.
YOUR MAJESTY!
MY PRIME MINISTER! THE ROGUE HAS BEEN BUSY AGAIN!
LET US NOT WASTE TIME. WE MUST HURRY BACK.
WHEN THE KING RETURNED TO THE PALACE HE HEARD THAT THE JEWELS HAD BEEN RETURNED TO THE MERCHANTS.
THIS IS NO COMMON THIEF. THERE IS SOME MOTIVE BEHIND IT ALL. I MUST FIND OUT WHAT IT IS.
THE NEXT MORNING—
ATTENTION! ATTENTION! HIS MAJESTY WISHES TO MEET THE YOUNG MAN WHO HAS MADE A FOOL OF THE WRESTLERS, THE JEWELLERS, THE PRIME MINISTER AND HIS MAJESTY HIMSELF. HE WILL NOT ONLY BE PARDONED BUT WILL ALSO BE REWARDED.


THE NEXT DAY, THE KING'S HALL WAS PACKED AS EVERYONE WAS EAGER TO SEE THE MERRY ROGUE.
WE ARE ANXIOUS TO MEET THE CLEVER MAN. WILL HE PRESENT HIMSELF?
AN EXPECTANT SILENCE FILLED THE HALL.
HE IS NOT HERE!
PERHAPS HE WAS AFRAID TO COME.
SUDDENLY—
HERE I AM!
HE IS THAT VILLAGER WHO WAS ALWAYS LOITERING IN THE BAZAR!
NO, NO, IT'S THAT SWINDLER FROM THE SOUTH!


SO THIS IS THE THIEF!
WHO ARE YOU?
I AM THE PRINCE OF AVANTI— YOUR SON!
YOUNG MAN, I ADMIRE YOUR DARING SPIRIT THOUGH I MYSELF HAVE BEEN A VICTIM OF YOUR PRANKS. BUT THIS IS GOING TOO FAR!


I AM SERIOUS. MY MOTHER IS QUEEN SHASHIKALA!
SHASHIKALA! YOU ARE HER SON?
YES, SHE WAS UNJUSTLY BANISHED BY YOU SEVENTEEN YEARS AGO. MY 'PRANKS', AS YOU CALL THEM, WERE MEANT TO ATTRACT YOUR ATTENTION AND TO DEMAND JUSTICE.
MY MOTHER WAS INNOCENT— THE VICTIM OF THE SIX QUEENS!
I HAVE LONG SUSPECTED IT....
THE KING STEPPED DOWN FROM HIS THRONE AND EMBRACED THUGSEN.
MY SON!
FORGIVE ME. THOSE WHO WERE RESPONSIBLE FOR THE INJUSTICE SHALL BE PUNISHED.


MEANWHILE, A SPECIAL CHARIOT SHALL BE SENT TO BRING YOUR MOTHER HERE WITH DUE HONOUR.
FATHER AND SON UNITED AT LAST!
HOW HAPPY WE ARE THAT OUR KING HAS A WORTHY HEIR!
FATHER, I HAVE ONE REQUEST TO MAKE. A STREET SINGER WAS KIND TO ME WHEN I WAS FRIENDLESS IN THIS CITY. I WANT HIM TO BE REWARDED.
WHEN QUEEN SHASHIKALA ARRIVED AT THE PALACE—
FORGIVE ME. I HAVE WRONGED YOU.
YOU WERE A VICTIM OF THE PLOT TOO, MY LORD.
THANKS TO MY LOYAL DEVAKI, OUR YEARS IN THE FOREST PASSED PLEASANTLY.
SHE SHALL BE WELL REWARDED.
THEN, AT A SPECIAL FEAST HELD TO CELEBRATE THE REUNION, THE KING MADE A PROCLAMATION.
I AM OLD AND WISH TO RETIRE. MY SON, PRINCE THUGSEN, SHALL BE INSTALLED ON THE THRONE.

AMAR CHITRA KATHA

THE RAINBOW PRINCE

FOLKTALES FROM BENGAL

AMAR
CHITRA
KATHA

The route to your roots

THE RAINBOW PRINCE

The beautiful and spoilt Princess Rupanjali is determined to marry only the Rainbow Prince. When she hears that he is trapped in the body of a red parrot she orders that every bird in the kingdom be caught and caged. When her maid Nilanjana protests at her cruelty, Rupanjali has her thrown into the cage too.

A newly-crowned king, ignores his old friend who is a shepherd. He wakes up the next morning with billions of needles poking his skin. Removing one makes two more grow back. As he lies in agony, his queen must find a way of helping him.

In these two folktales from Bengal, arrogance is always punished – even in a prince or a princess.

Script
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Subba Rao

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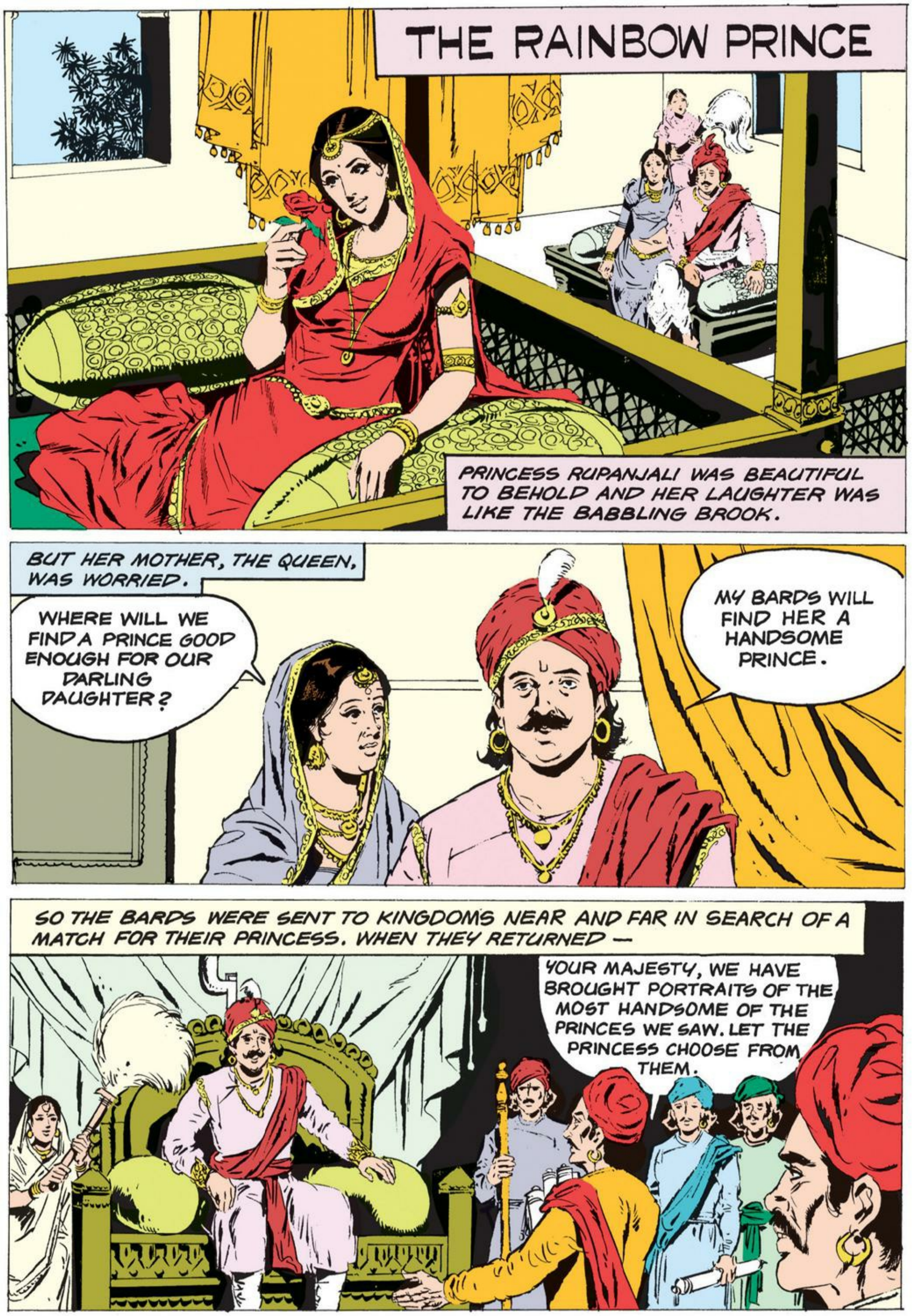
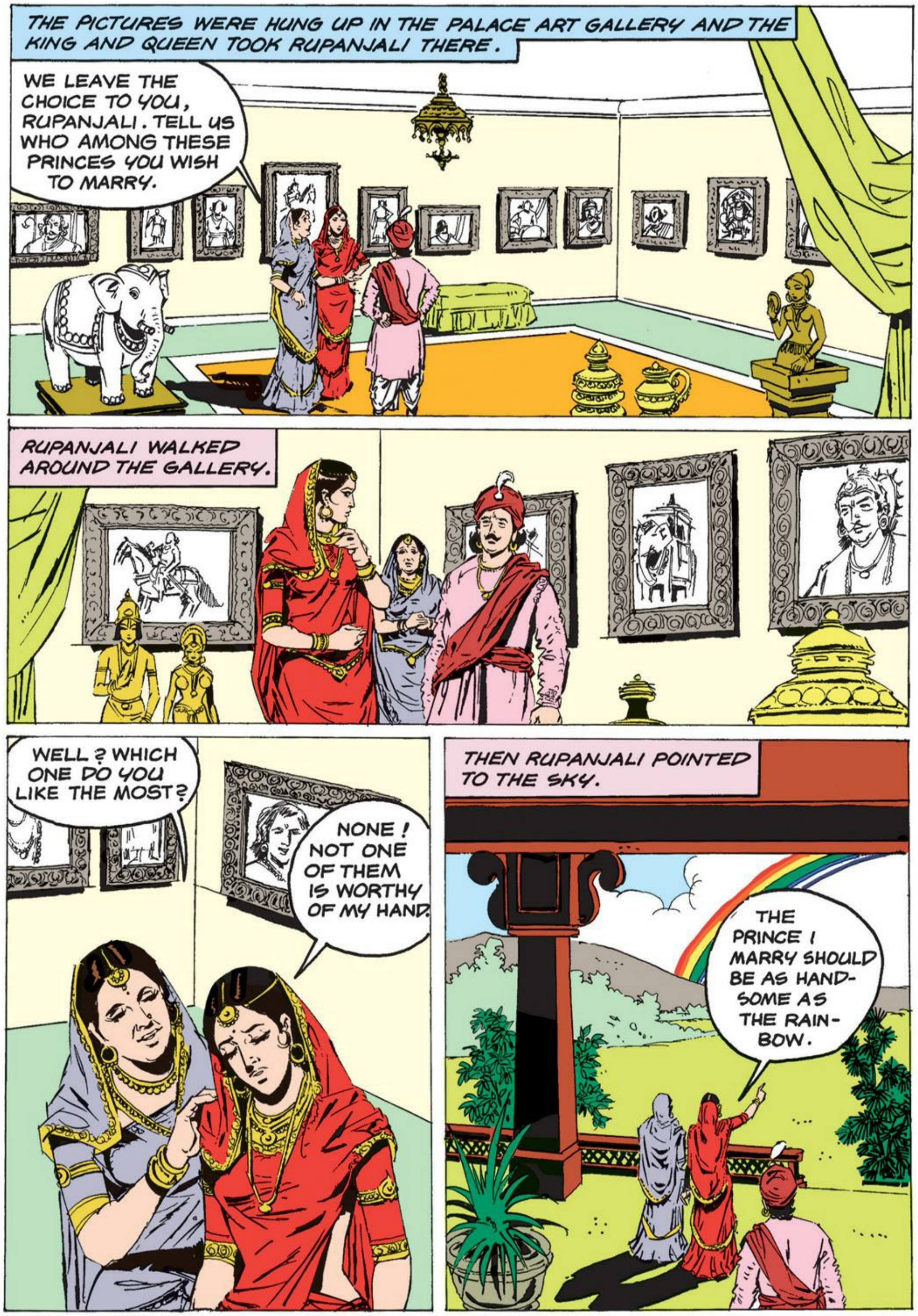
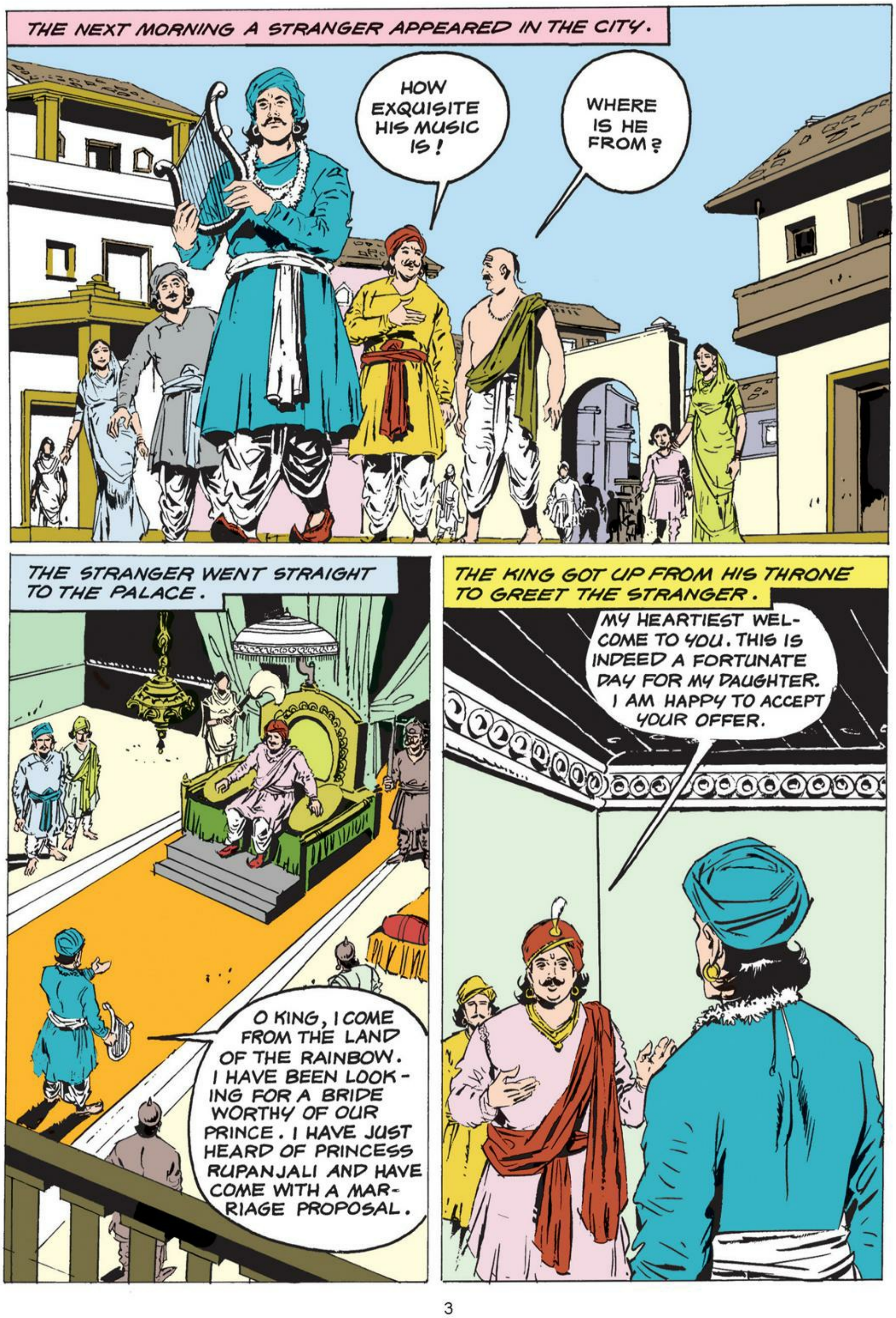
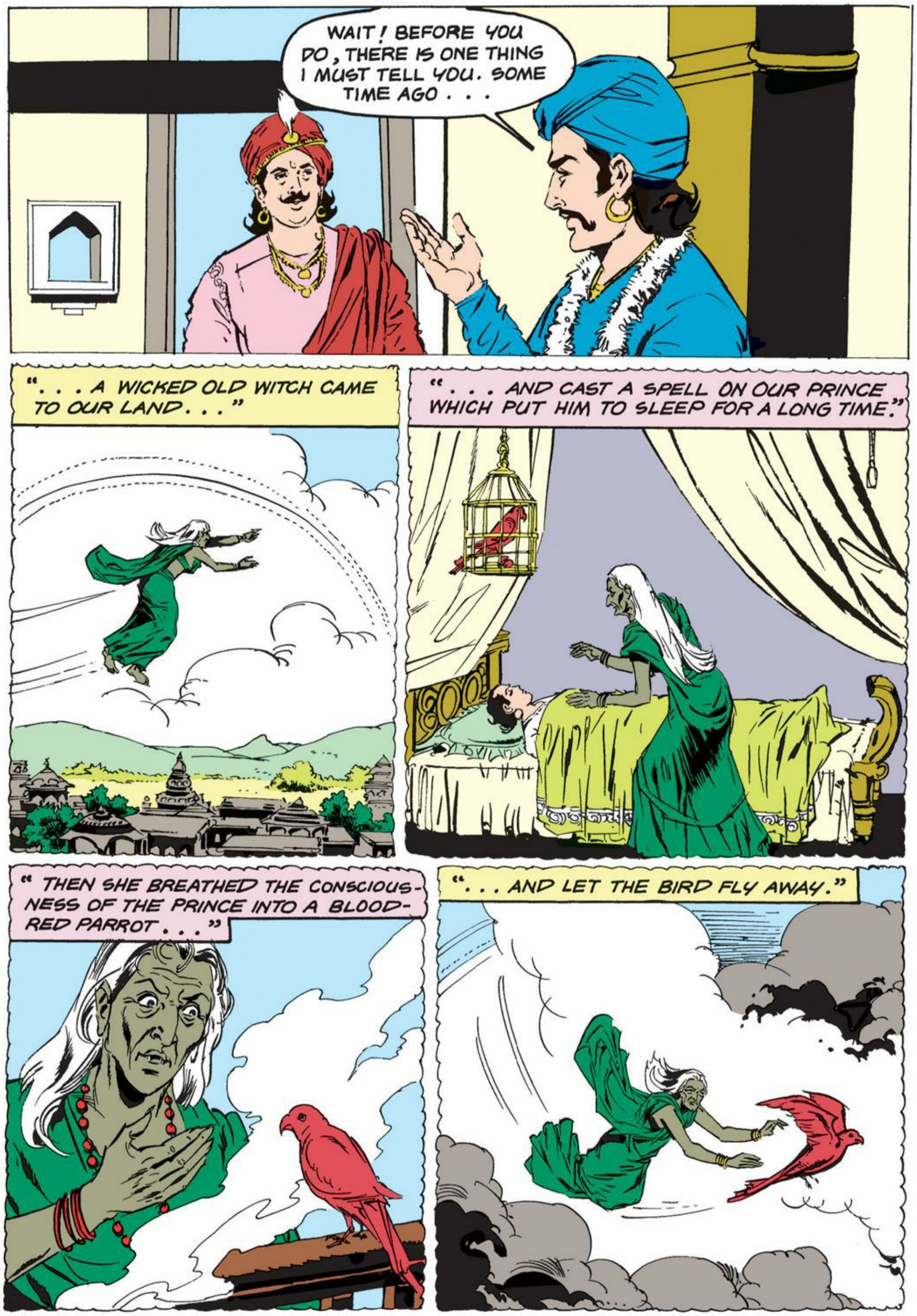
Editor
Anant Pai

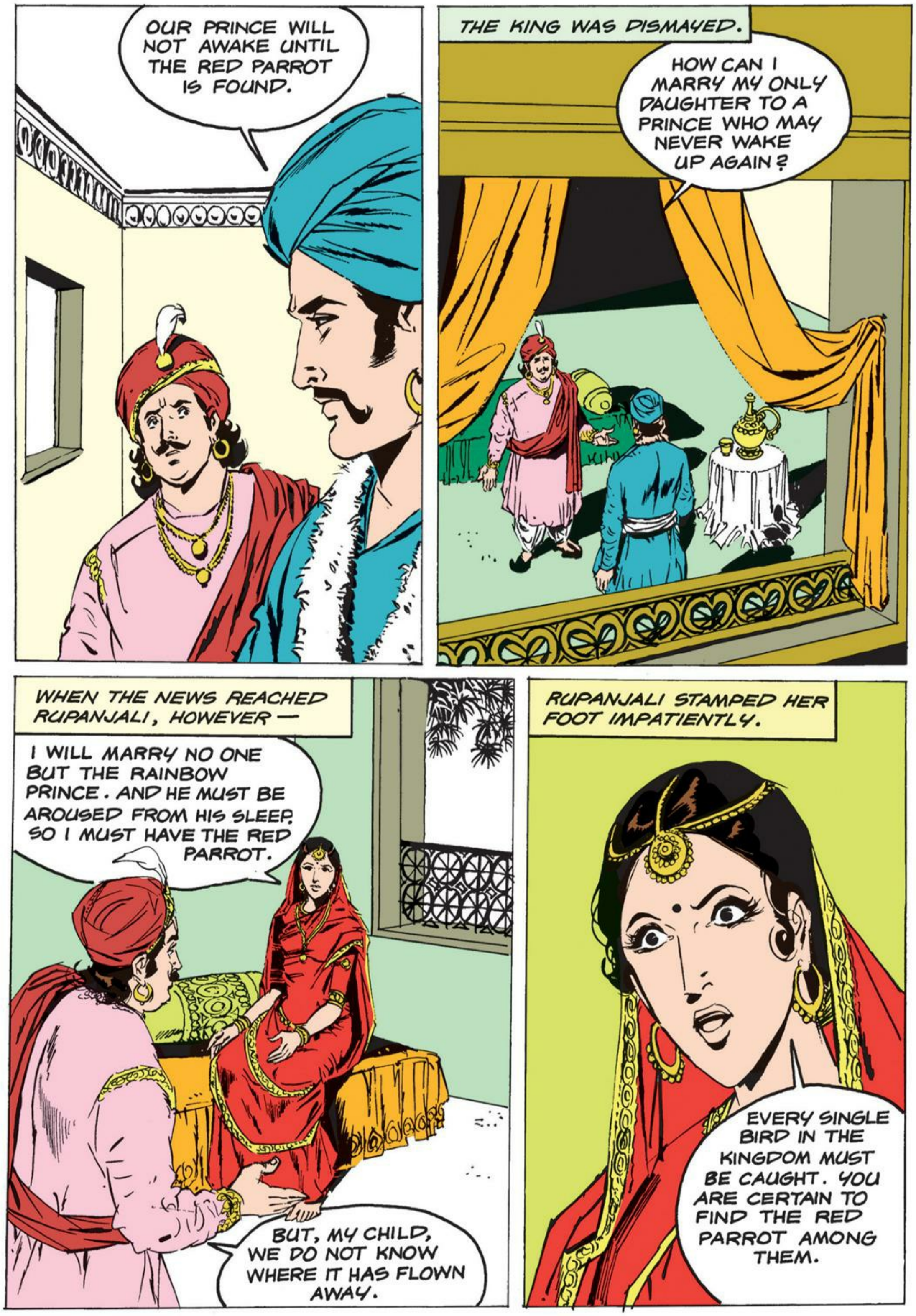
THE RAINBOW PRINCE

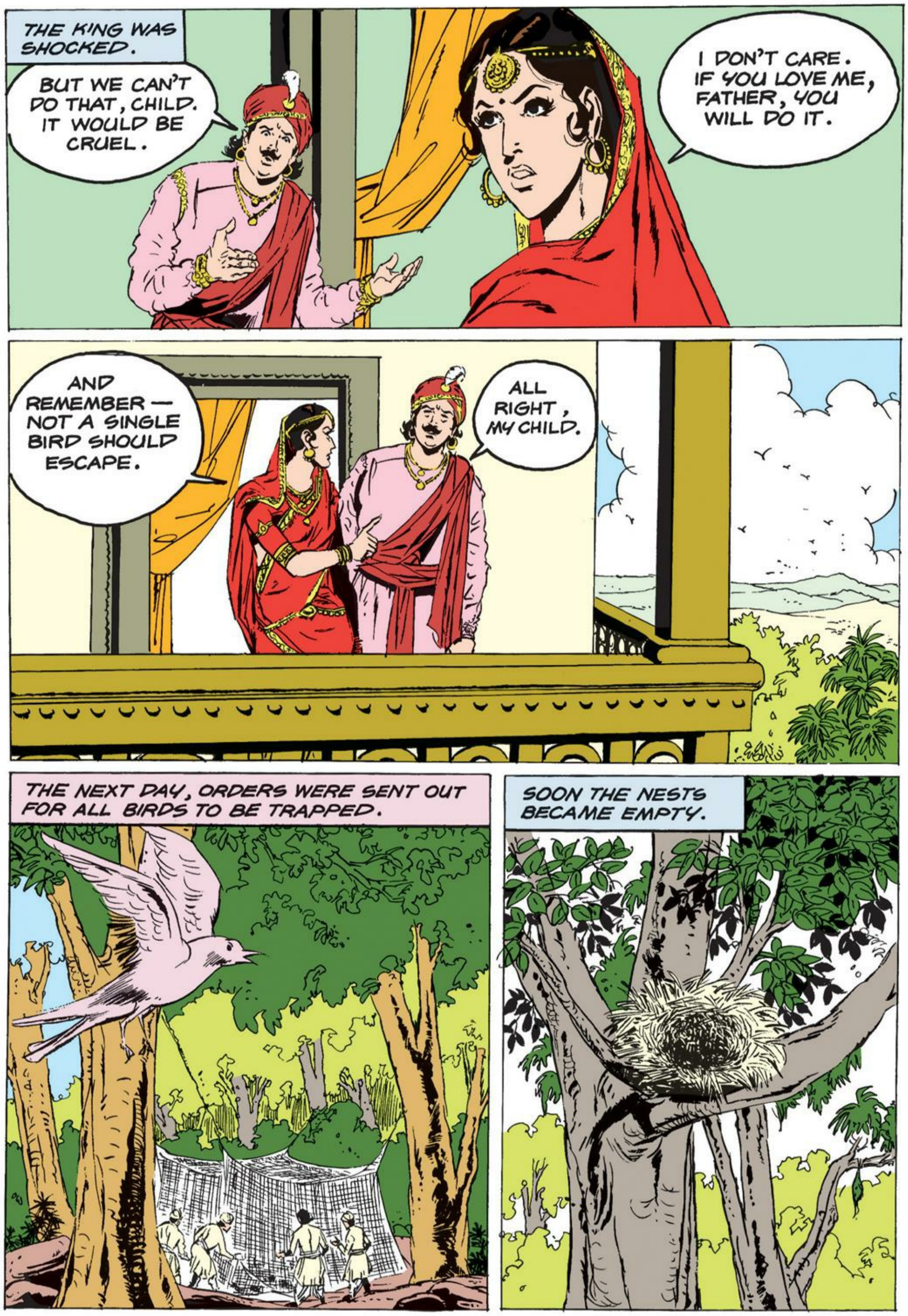

PRINCESS RUPANJALI WAS BEAUTIFUL TO BEHOLD AND HER LAUGHTER WAS LIKE THE BABBLING BROOK.
BUT HER MOTHER, THE QUEEN, WAS WORRIED.
WHERE WILL WE FIND A PRINCE GOOD ENOUGH FOR OUR DARLING DAUGHTER?
MY BARDS WILL FIND HER A HANDSOME PRINCE.
SO THE BARDS WERE SENT TO KINGDOMS NEAR AND FAR IN SEARCH OF A MATCH FOR THEIR PRINCESS. WHEN THEY RETURNED —
YOUR MAJESTY, WE HAVE BROUGHT PORTRAITS OF THE MOST HANDSOME OF THE PRINCES WE SAW. LET THE PRINCESS CHOOSE FROM THEM.

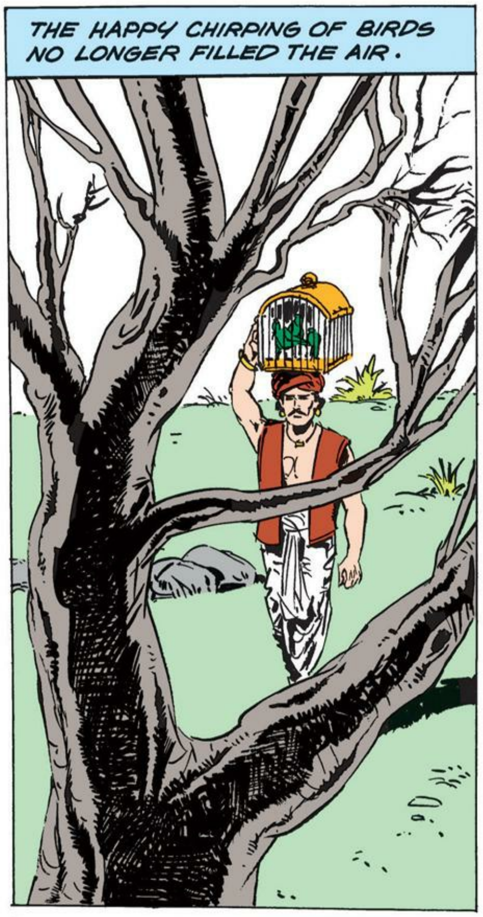

THE PICTURES WERE HUNG UP IN THE PALACE ART GALLERY AND THE KING AND QUEEN TOOK RUPANJALI THERE.
WE LEAVE THE CHOICE TO YOU, RUPANJALI. TELL US WHO AMONG THESE PRINCES YOU WISH TO MARRY.
RUPANJALI WALKED AROUND THE GALLERY.
WELL? WHICH ONE DO YOU LIKE THE MOST?
NONE! NOT ONE OF THEM IS WORTHY OF MY HAND.
THEN RUPANJALI POINTED TO THE SKY.
THE PRINCE I MARRY SHOULD BE AS HANDSOME AS THE RAINBOW.

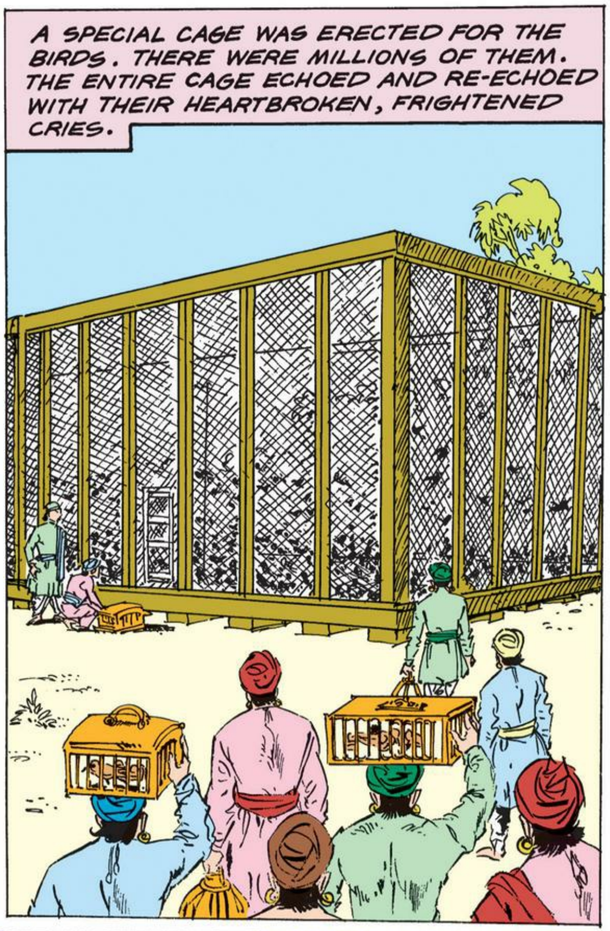

THE NEXT MORNING A STRANGER APPEARED IN THE CITY.
HOW EXQUISITE HIS MUSIC IS!
WHERE IS HE FROM?
THE STRANGER WENT STRAIGHT TO THE PALACE.
O KING, I COME FROM THE LAND OF THE RAINBOW. I HAVE BEEN LOOKING FOR A BRIDE WORTHY OF OUR PRINCE. I HAVE JUST HEARD OF PRINCESS RUPANJALI AND HAVE COME WITH A MARRIAGE PROPOSAL.
THE KING GOT UP FROM HIS THRONE TO GREET THE STRANGER.
MY HEARTIEST WELCOME TO YOU. THIS IS INDEED A FORTUNATE DAY FOR MY DAUGHTER. I AM HAPPY TO ACCEPT YOUR OFFER.

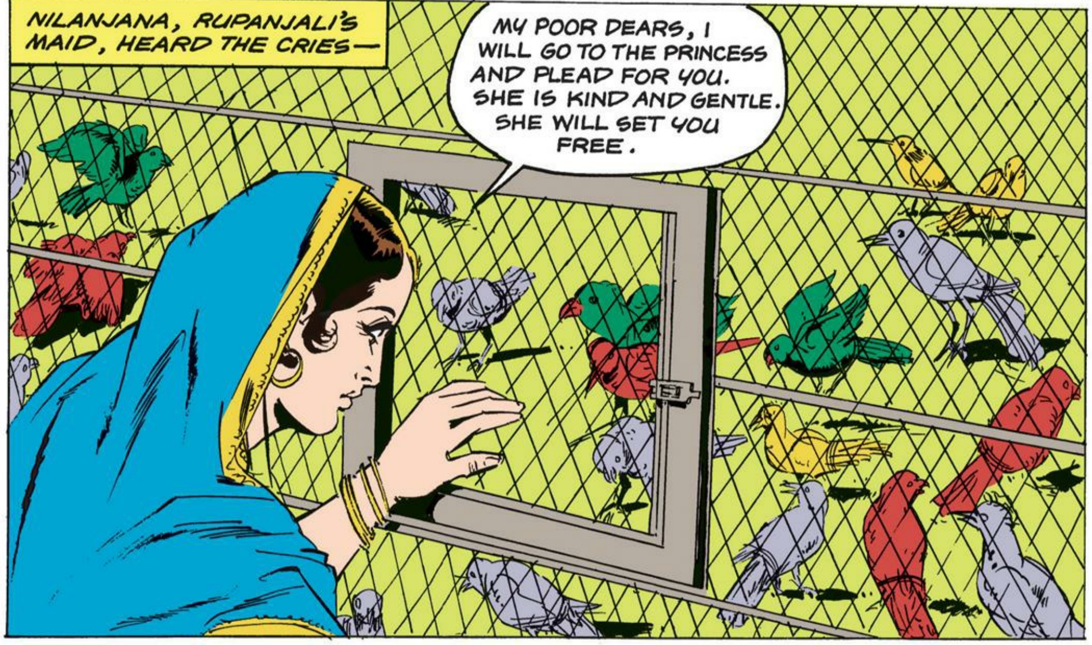

WAIT! BEFORE YOU DO, THERE IS ONE THING I MUST TELL YOU. SOME TIME AGO . . .
". . . A WICKED OLD WITCH CAME TO OUR LAND . . ."
". . . AND CAST A SPELL ON OUR PRINCE WHICH PUT HIM TO SLEEP FOR A LONG TIME."
" THEN SHE BREATHED THE CONSCIOUSNESS OF THE PRINCE INTO A BLOOD-RED PARROT . . ."
". . . AND LET THE BIRD FLY AWAY."

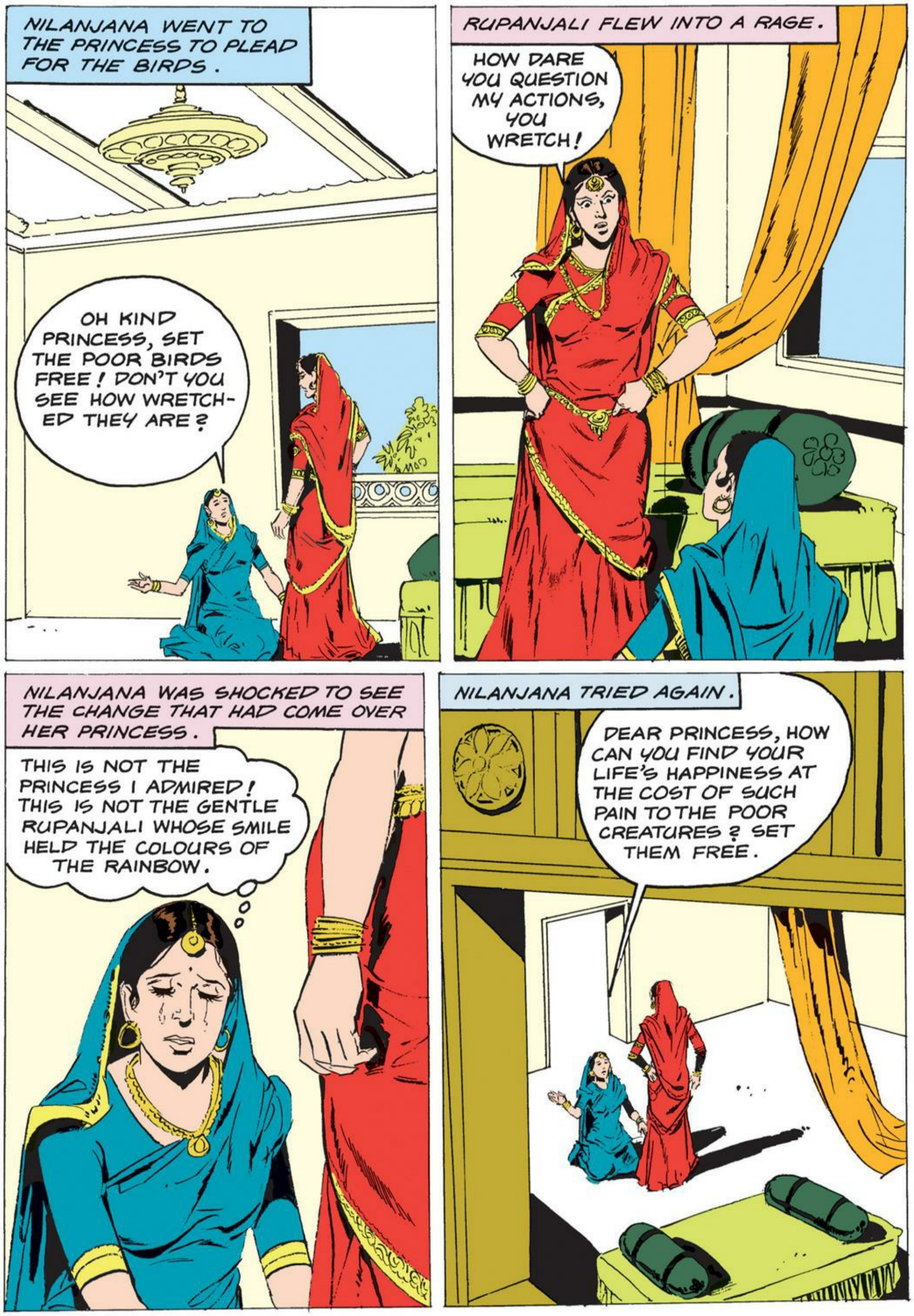

OUR PRINCE WILL NOT AWAKE UNTIL THE RED PARROT IS FOUND.
THE KING WAS DISMAYED.
HOW CAN I MARRY MY ONLY DAUGHTER TO A PRINCE WHO MAY NEVER WAKE UP AGAIN?
WHEN THE NEWS REACHED RUPANJALI, HOWEVER —
I WILL MARRY NO ONE BUT THE RAINBOW PRINCE. AND HE MUST BE AROUSED FROM HIS SLEEP. SO I MUST HAVE THE RED PARROT.
BUT, MY CHILD, WE DO NOT KNOW WHERE IT HAS FLOWN AWAY.
RUPANJALI STAMPED HER FOOT IMPATIENTLY.
EVERY SINGLE BIRD IN THE KINGDOM MUST BE CAUGHT. YOU ARE CERTAIN TO FIND THE RED PARROT AMONG THEM.

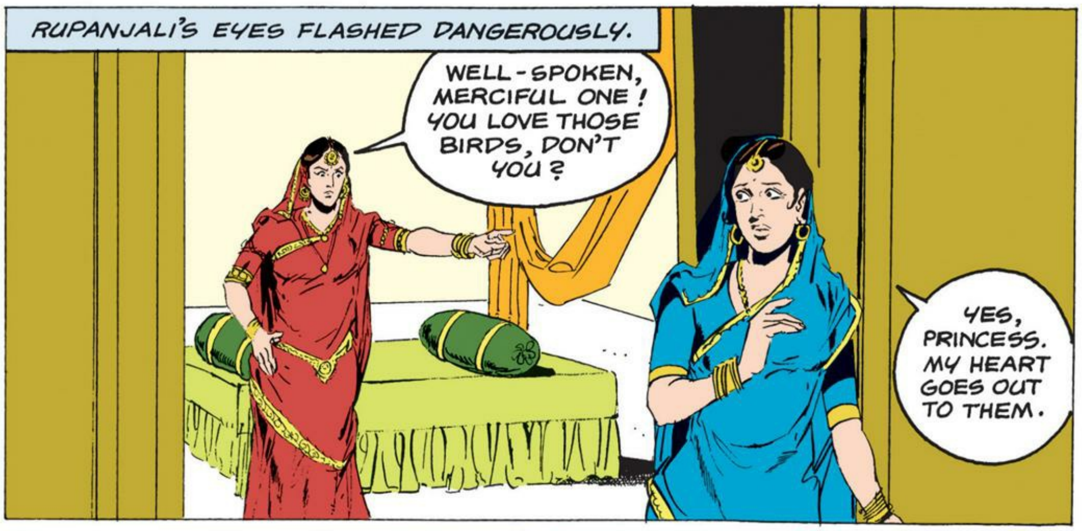

THE KING WAS SHOCKED.
BUT WE CAN'T DO THAT, CHILD. IT WOULD BE CRUEL.
I DON'T CARE. IF YOU LOVE ME, FATHER, YOU WILL DO IT.
AND REMEMBER — NOT A SINGLE BIRD SHOULD ESCAPE.
ALL RIGHT, MY CHILD.
THE NEXT DAY, ORDERS WERE SENT OUT FOR ALL BIRDS TO BE TRAPPED.
SOON THE NESTS BECAME EMPTY.

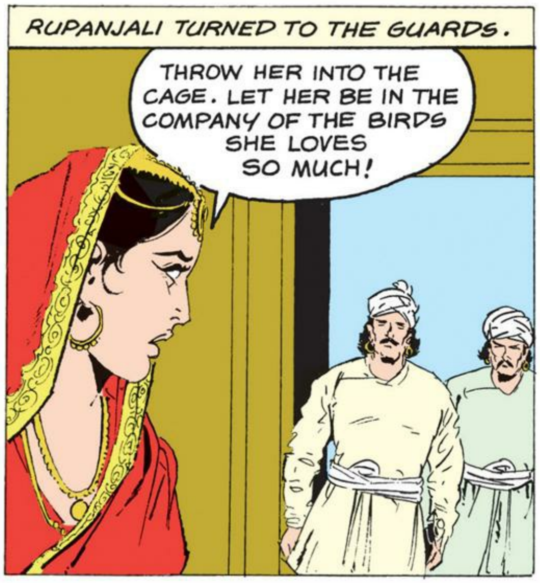

THE HAPPY CHIRPING OF BIRDS NO LONGER FILLED THE AIR.

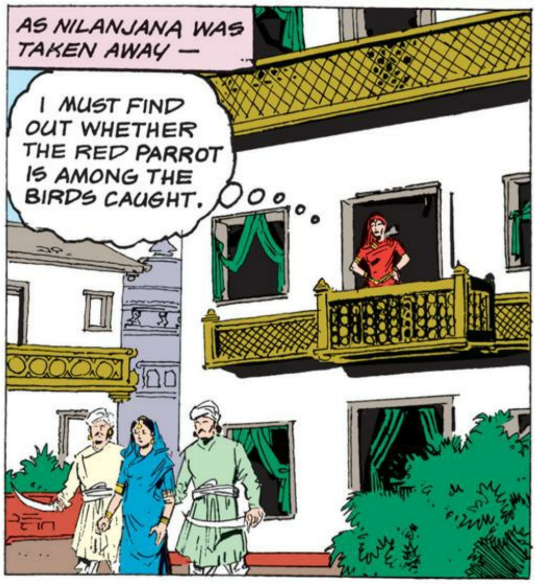

A SPECIAL CAGE WAS ERECTED FOR THE BIRDS. THERE WERE MILLIONS OF THEM. THE ENTIRE CAGE ECHOED AND RE-ECHOED WITH THEIR HEARTBROKEN, FRIGHTENED CRIES.

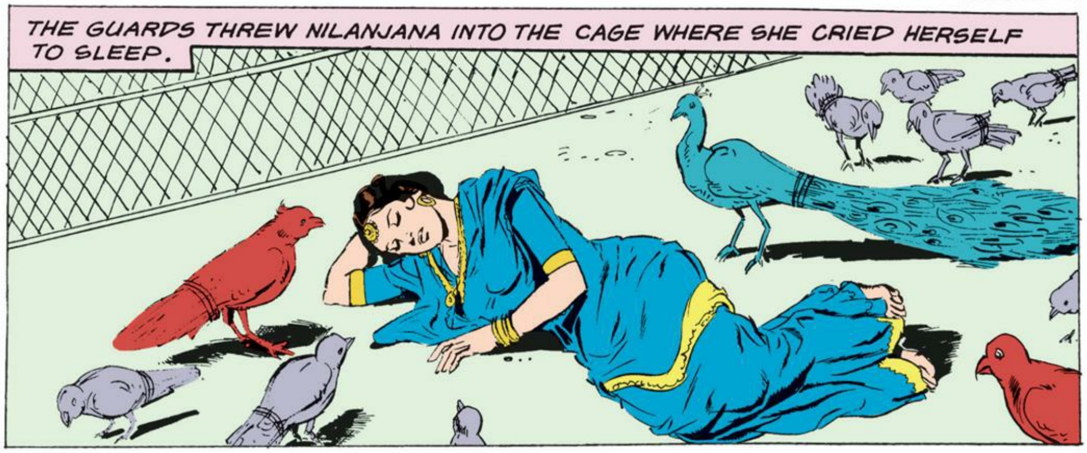

NILANJANA, RUPANJALI'S MAID, HEARD THE CRIES—
MY POOR DEARS, I WILL GO TO THE PRINCESS AND PLEAD FOR YOU. SHE IS KIND AND GENTLE. SHE WILL SET YOU FREE.

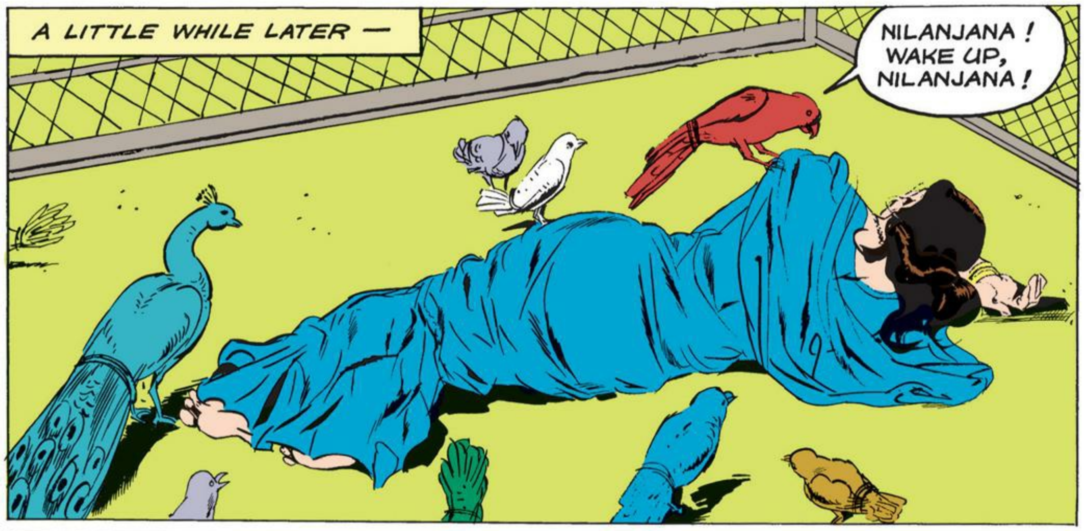

NILANJANA WENT TO THE PRINCESS TO PLEAD FOR THE BIRDS.
OH KIND PRINCESS, SET THE POOR BIRDS FREE! DON'T YOU SEE HOW WRETCHED THEY ARE?
RUPANJALI FLEW INTO A RAGE.
HOW DARE YOU QUESTION MY ACTIONS, YOU WRETCH!
NILANJANA WAS SHOCKED TO SEE THE CHANGE THAT HAD COME OVER HER PRINCESS.
THIS IS NOT THE PRINCESS I ADMIRED! THIS IS NOT THE GENTLE RUPANJALI WHOSE SMILE HELD THE COLOURS OF THE RAINBOW.
NILANJANA TRIED AGAIN.
DEAR PRINCESS, HOW CAN YOU FIND YOUR LIFE'S HAPPINESS AT THE COST OF SUCH PAIN TO THE POOR CREATURES? SET THEM FREE.

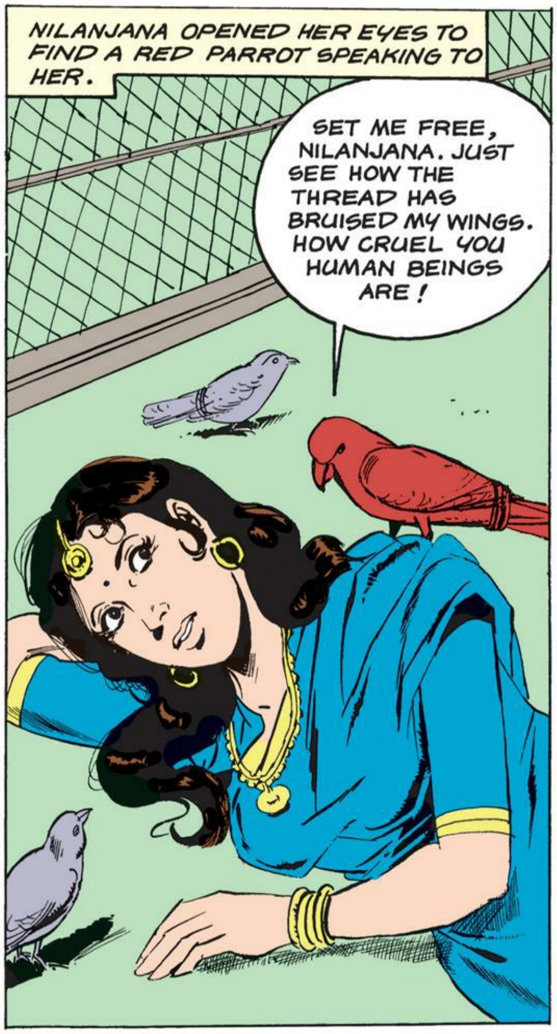

RUPANJALI'S EYES FLASHED DANGEROUSLY.
WELL-SPOKEN, MERCIFUL ONE! YOU LOVE THOSE BIRDS, DON'T YOU?
YES, PRINCESS. MY HEART GOES OUT TO THEM.

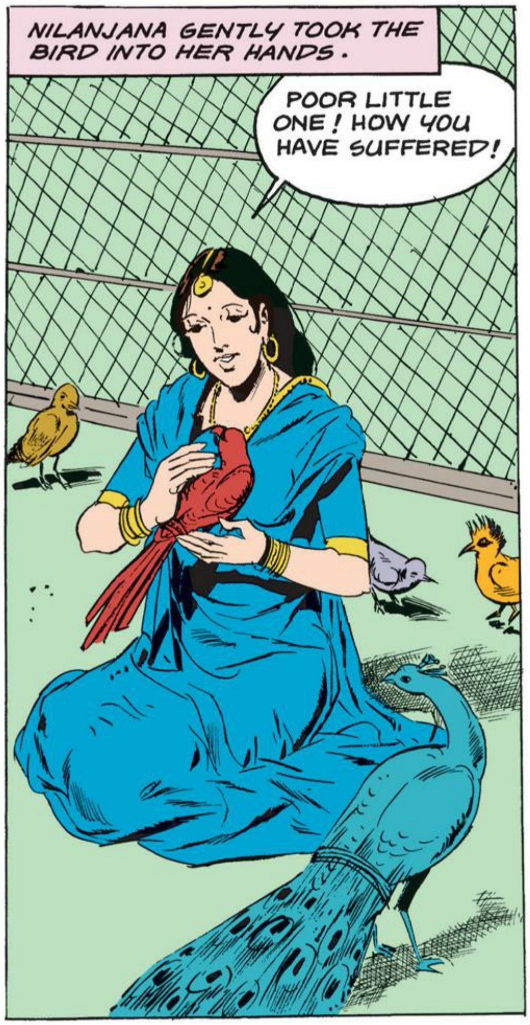

RUPANJALI TURNED TO THE GUARDS.
THROW HER INTO THE CAGE. LET HER BE IN THE COMPANY OF THE BIRDS SHE LOVES SO MUCH!

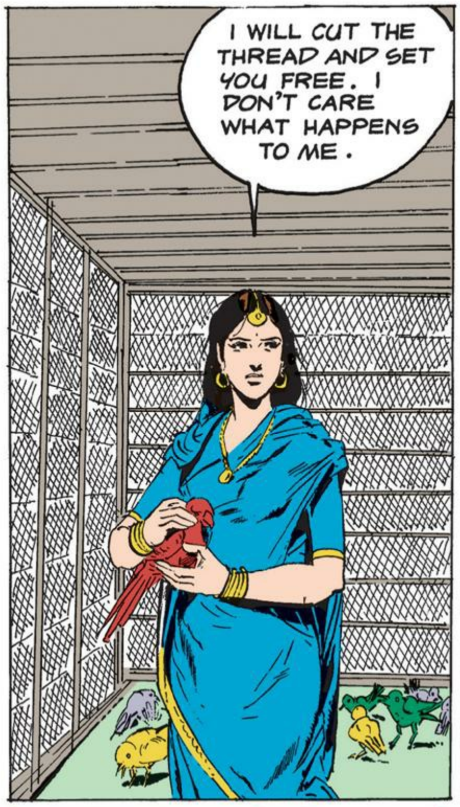

AS NILANJANA WAS TAKEN AWAY —
I MUST FIND OUT WHETHER THE RED PARROT IS AMONG THE BIRDS CAUGHT.

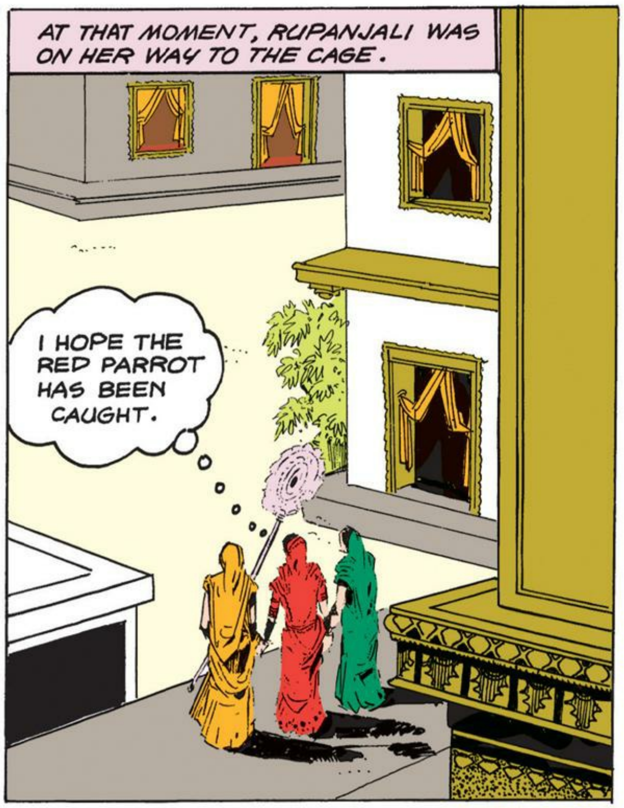

THE GUARDS THREW NILANJANA INTO THE CAGE WHERE SHE CRIED HERSELF TO SLEEP.

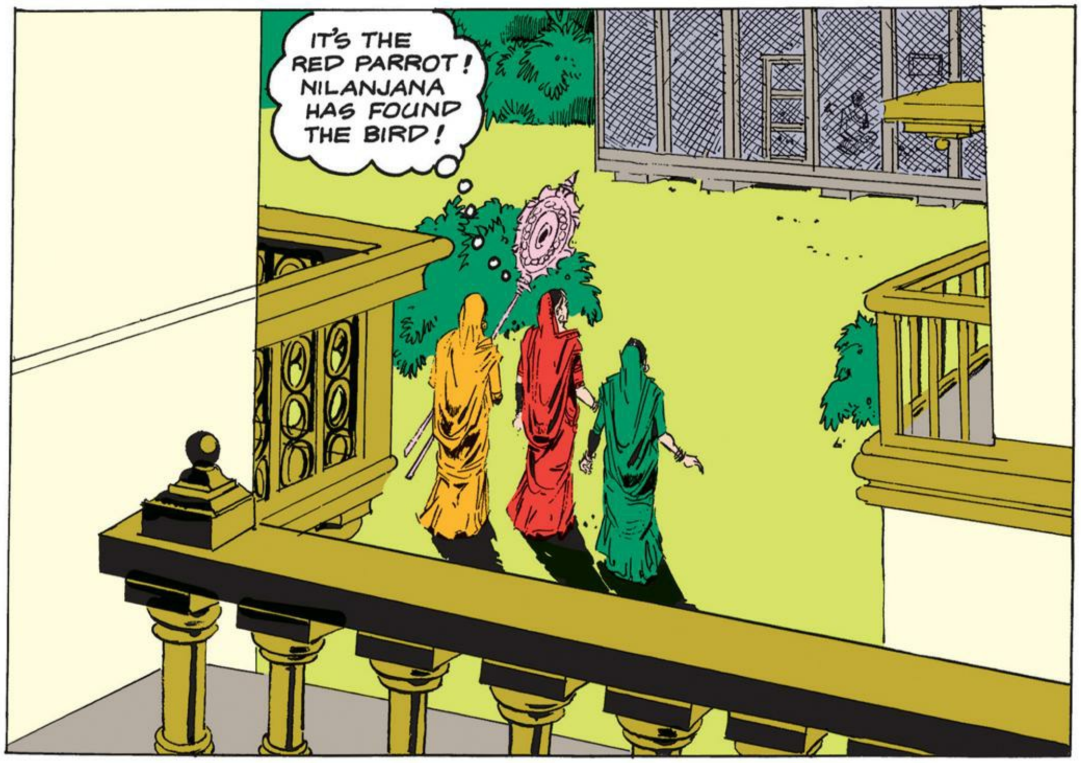

A LITTLE WHILE LATER —
NILANJANA ! WAKE UP, NILANJANA !

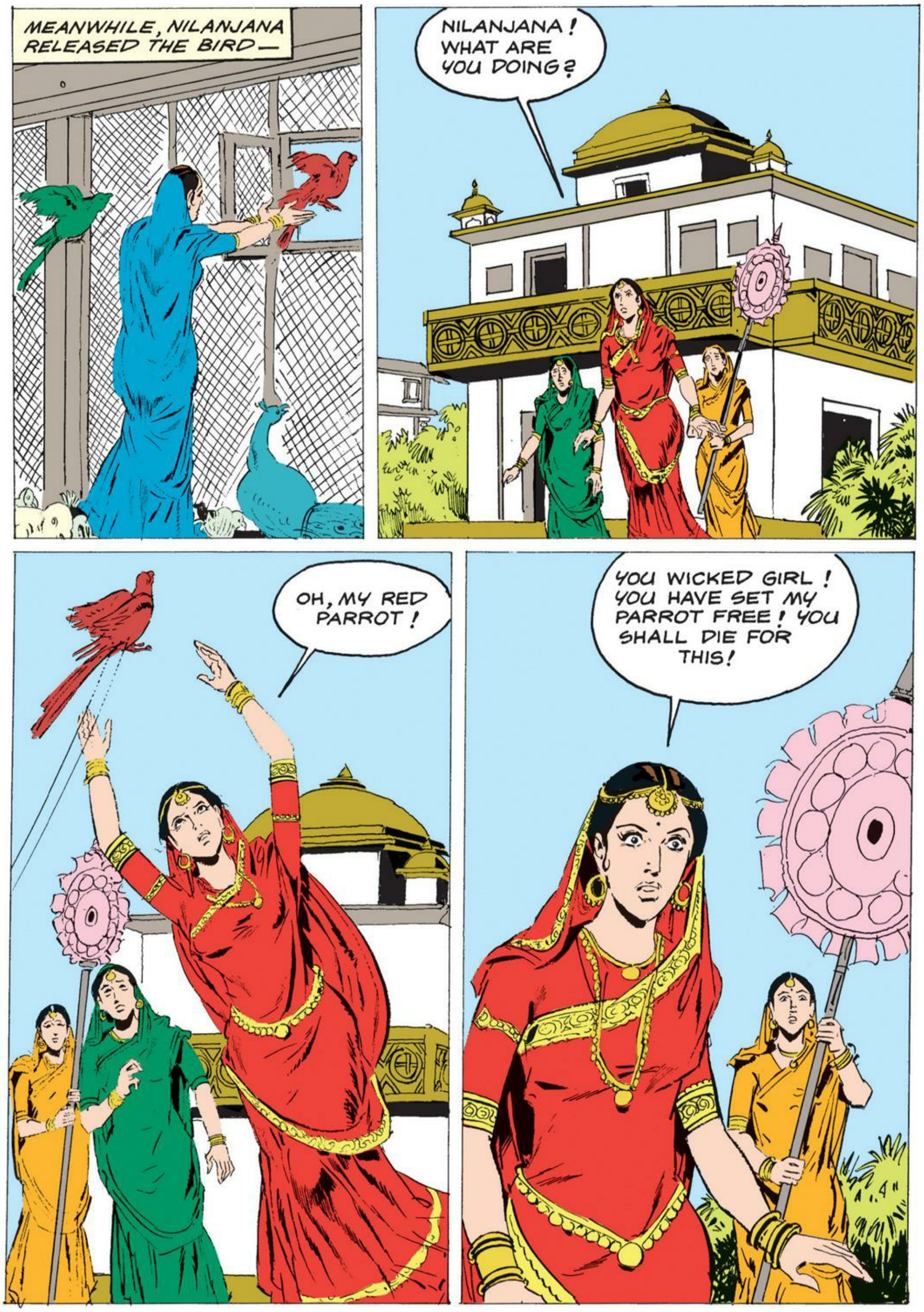

NILANJANA OPENED HER EYES TO FIND A RED PARROT SPEAKING TO HER.
SET ME FREE, NILANJANA. JUST SEE HOW THE THREAD HAS BRUISED MY WINGS. HOW CRUEL YOU HUMAN BEINGS ARE !

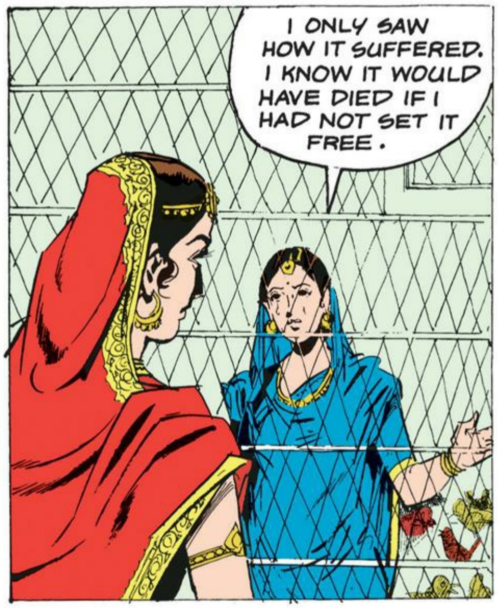

NILANJANA GENTLY TOOK THE BIRD INTO HER HANDS.
POOR LITTLE ONE ! HOW YOU HAVE SUFFERED !

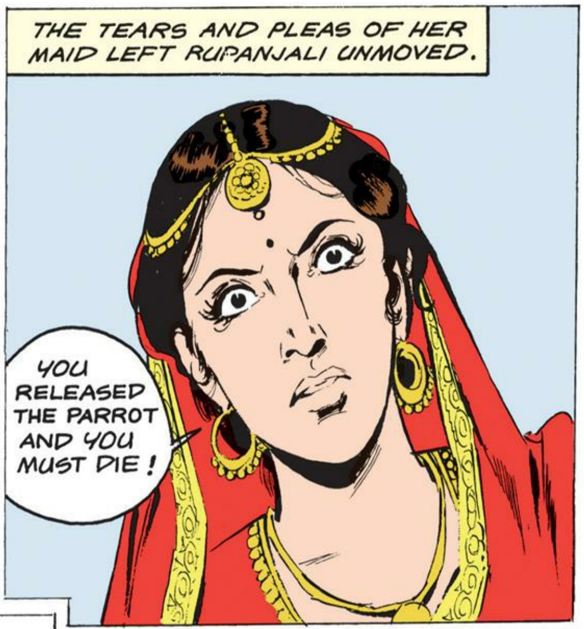

I WILL CUT THE THREAD AND SET YOU FREE. I DON'T CARE WHAT HAPPENS TO ME.

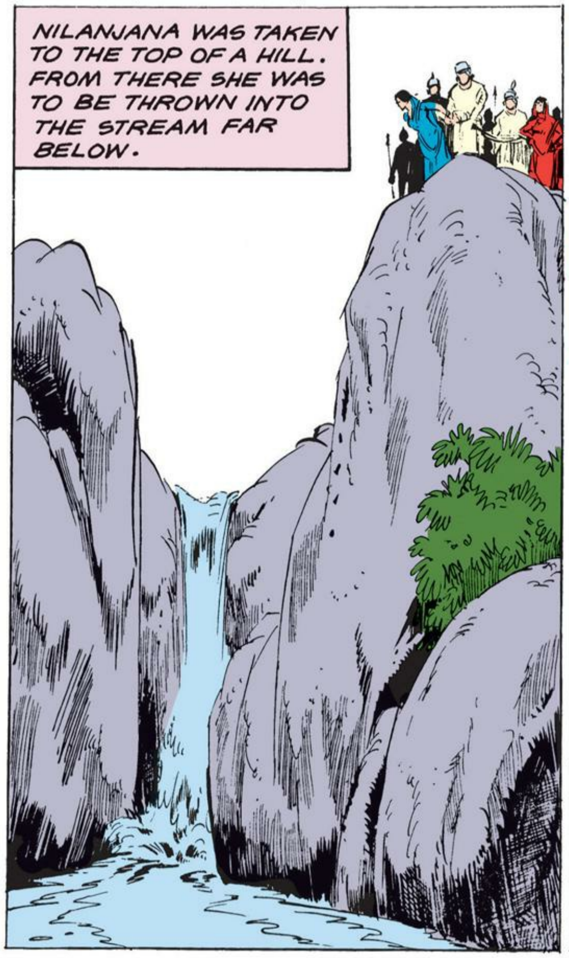

AT THAT MOMENT, RUPANJALI WAS ON HER WAY TO THE CAGE.
I HOPE THE RED PARROT HAS BEEN CAUGHT.

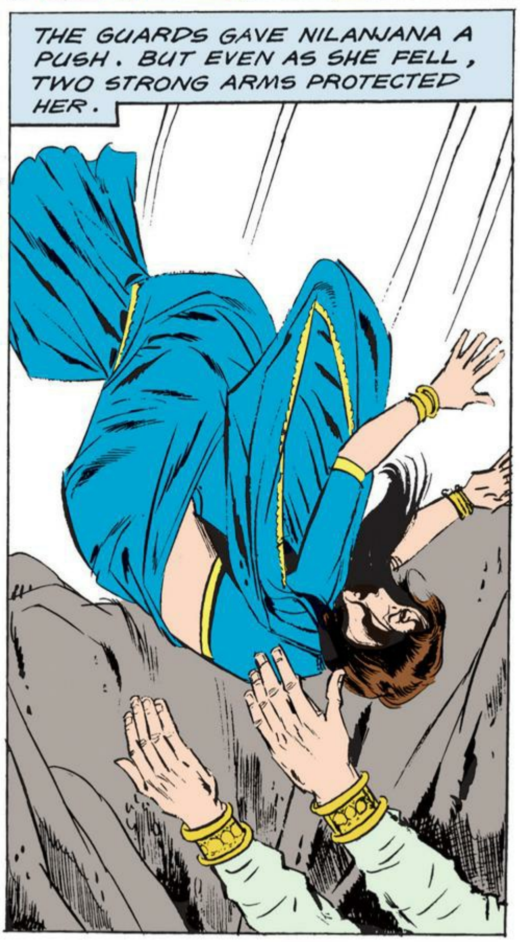

IT'S THE RED PARROT! NILANJANA HAS FOUND THE BIRD!

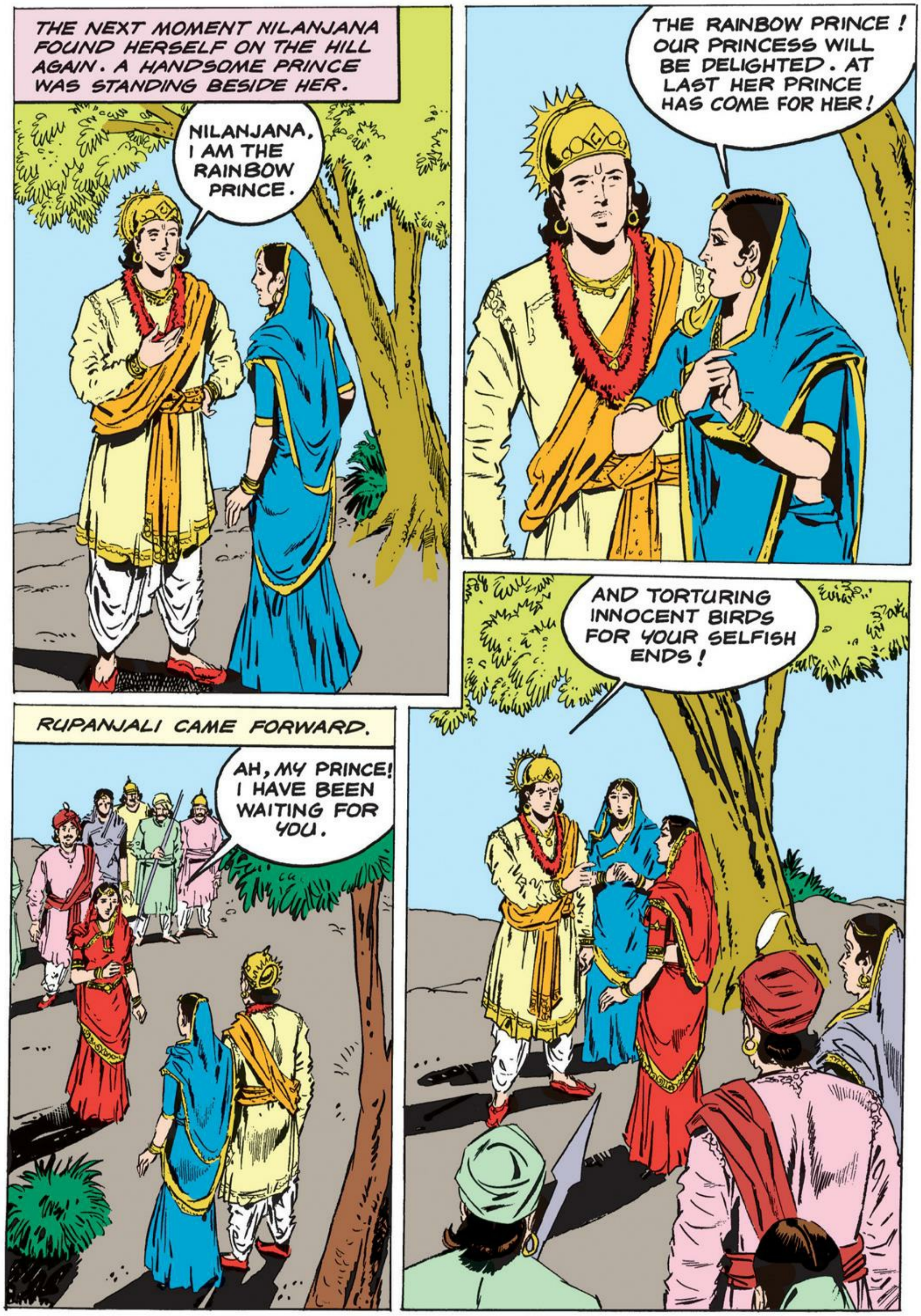

MEANWHILE, NILANJANA RELEASED THE BIRD—
NILANJANA! WHAT ARE YOU DOING?
OH, MY RED PARROT!
YOU WICKED GIRL! YOU HAVE SET MY PARROT FREE! YOU SHALL DIE FOR THIS!

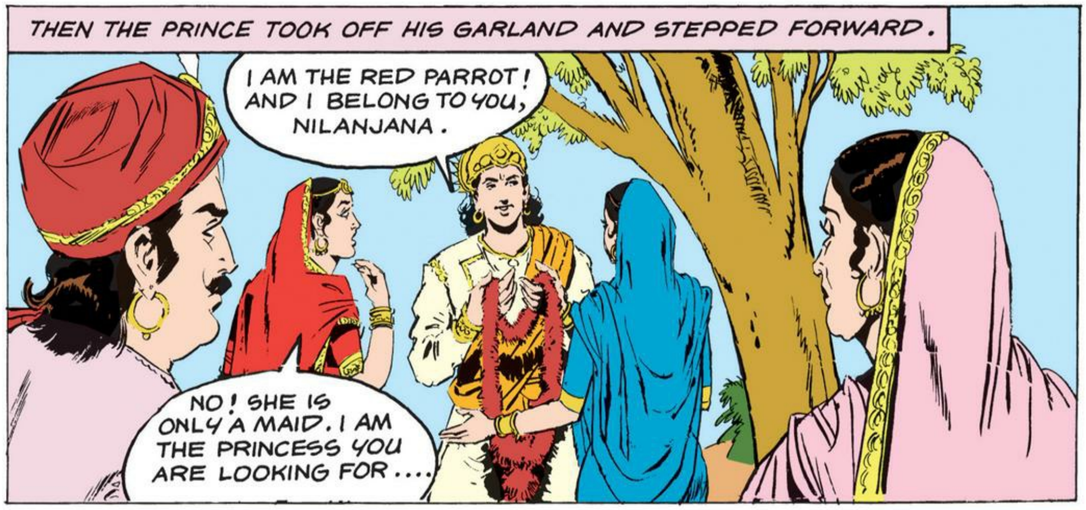

I ONLY SAW HOW IT SUFFERED. I KNOW IT WOULD HAVE DIED IF I HAD NOT SET IT FREE.

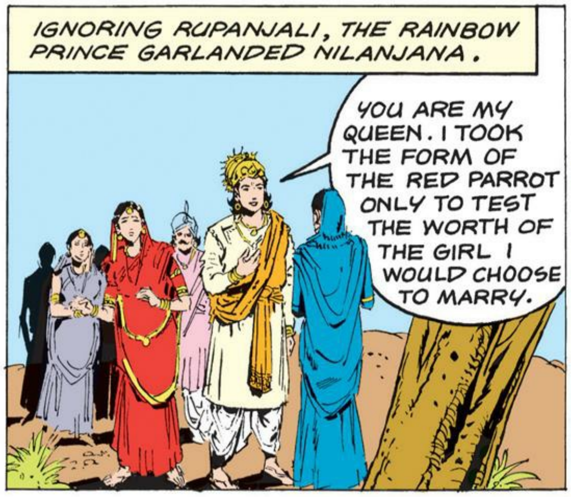

THE TEARS AND PLEAS OF HER MAID LEFT RUPANJALI UNMOVED.
YOU RELEASED THE PARROT AND YOU MUST DIE!

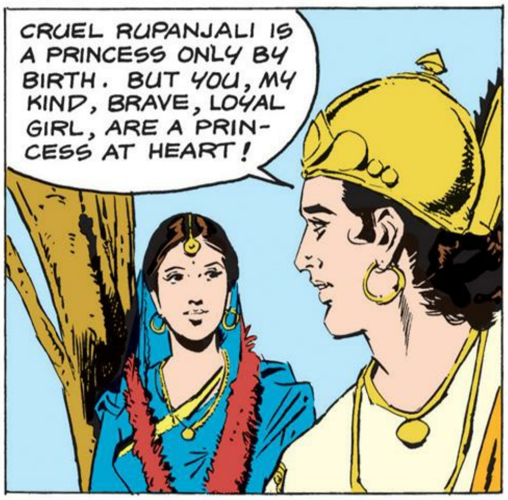

NILANJANA WAS TAKEN TO THE TOP OF A HILL. FROM THERE SHE WAS TO BE THROWN INTO THE STREAM FAR BELOW.

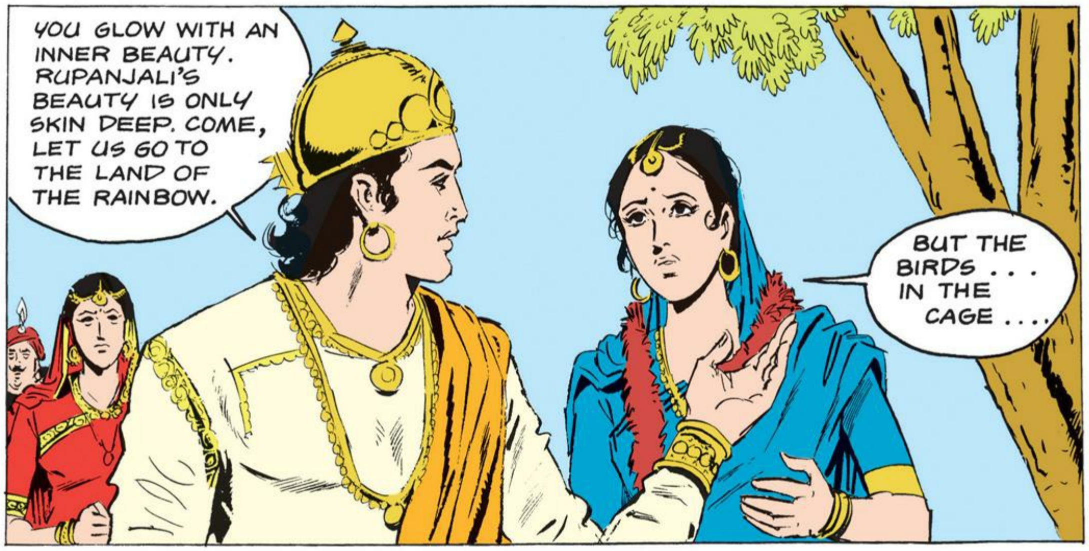

THE GUARDS GAVE NILANJANA A PUSH. BUT EVEN AS SHE FELL, TWO STRONG ARMS PROTECTED HER.

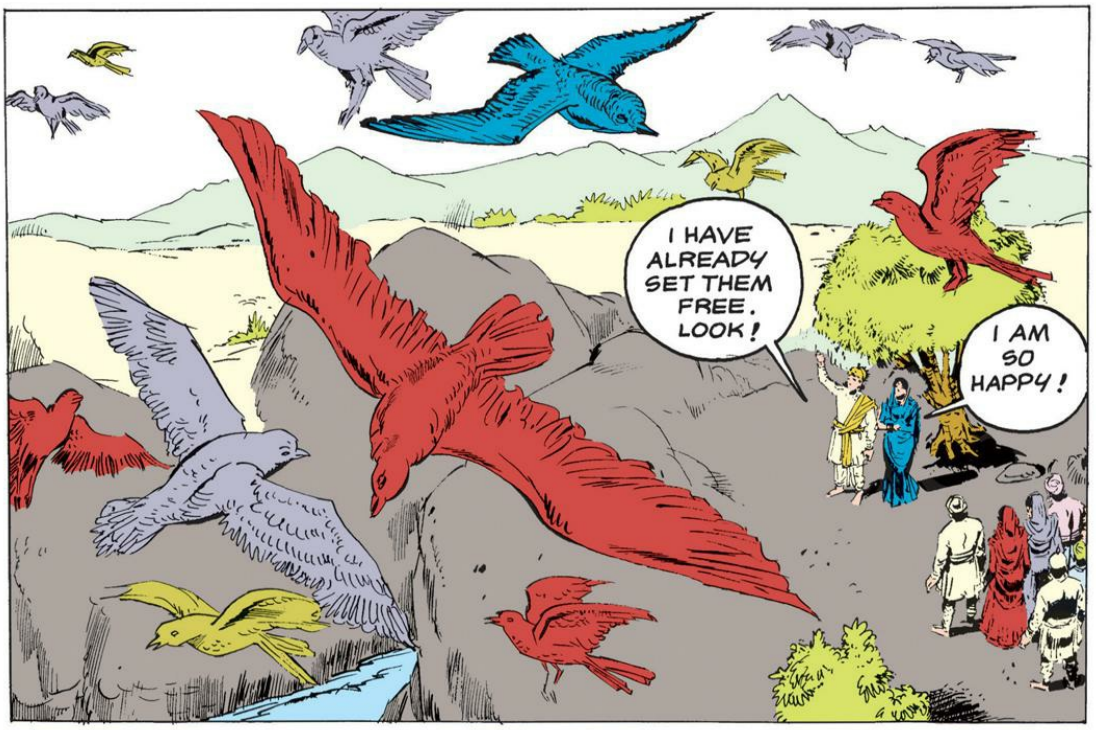

THE NEXT MOMENT NILANJANA FOUND HERSELF ON THE HILL AGAIN. A HANDSOME PRINCE WAS STANDING BESIDE HER.
NILANJANA, I AM THE RAINBOW PRINCE.
THE RAINBOW PRINCE! OUR PRINCESS WILL BE DELIGHTED. AT LAST HER PRINCE HAS COME FOR HER!
RUPANJALI CAME FORWARD.
AH, MY PRINCE! I HAVE BEEN WAITING FOR YOU.
AND TORTURING INNOCENT BIRDS FOR YOUR SELFISH ENDS!

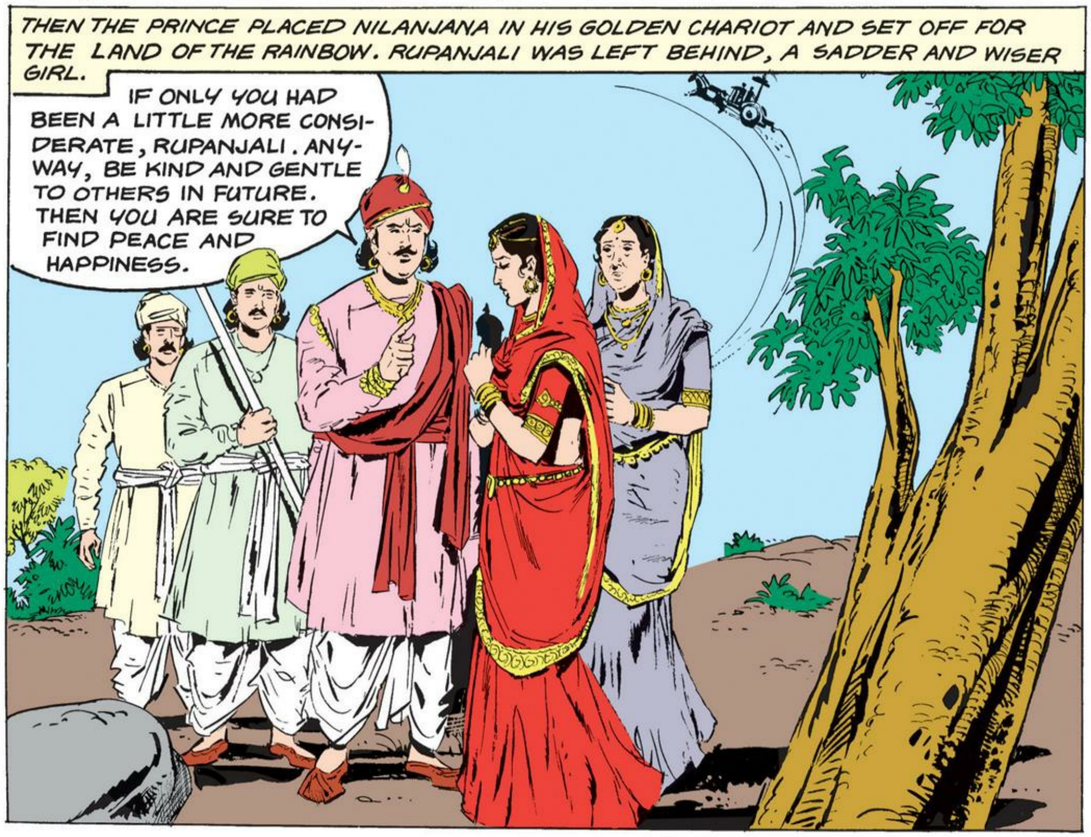

THEN THE PRINCE TOOK OFF HIS GARLAND AND STEPPED FORWARD.
I AM THE RED PARROT! AND I BELONG TO YOU, NILANJANA.
NO! SHE IS ONLY A MAID. I AM THE PRINCESS YOU ARE LOOKING FOR....


IGNORING RUPANJALI, THE RAINBOW PRINCE GARLANDED NILANJANA.
YOU ARE MY QUEEN. I TOOK THE FORM OF THE RED PARROT ONLY TO TEST THE WORTH OF THE GIRL I WOULD CHOOSE TO MARRY.

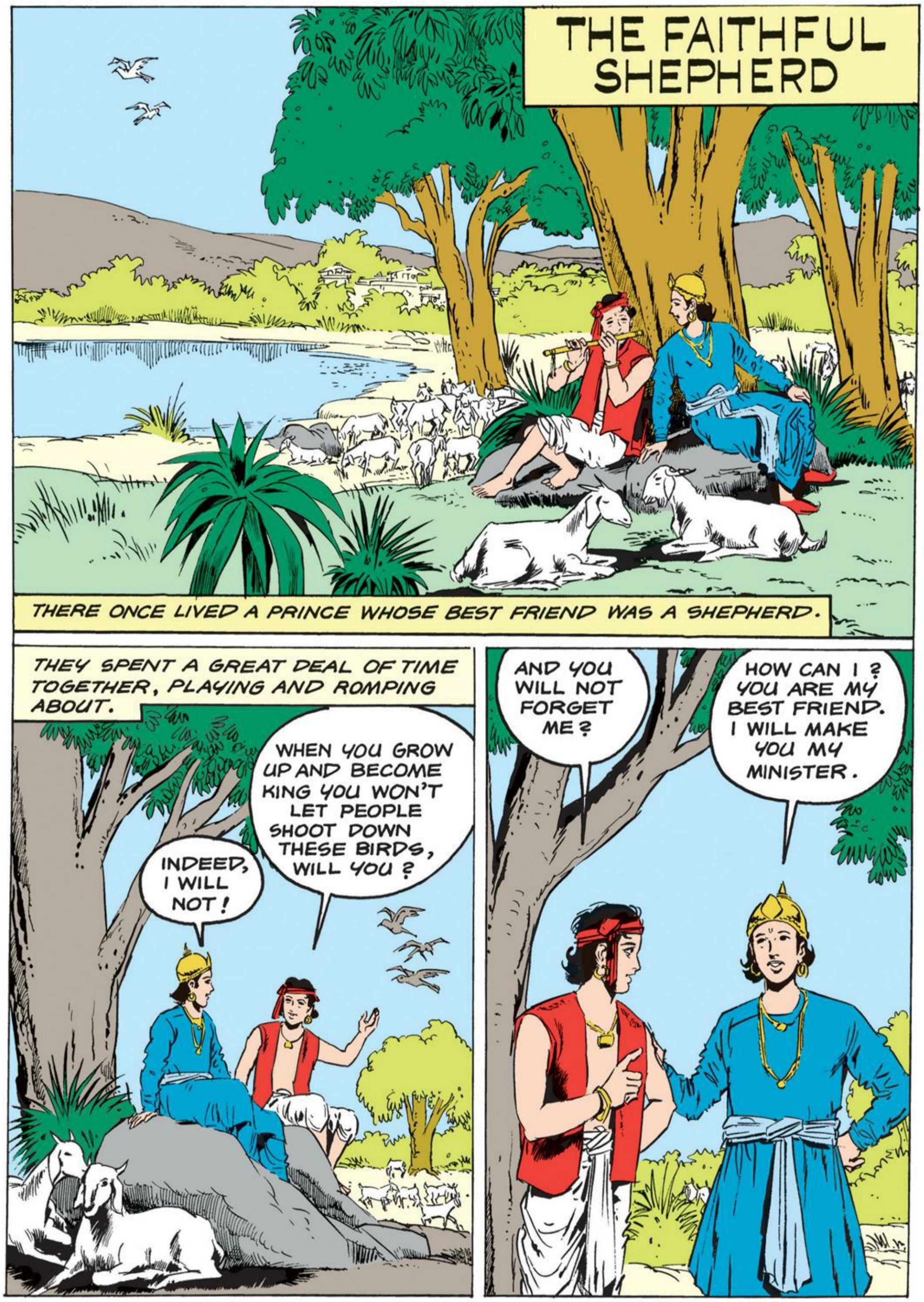

CRUEL RUPANJALI IS A PRINCESS ONLY BY BIRTH. BUT YOU, MY KIND, BRAVE, LOYAL GIRL, ARE A PRINCESS AT HEART!

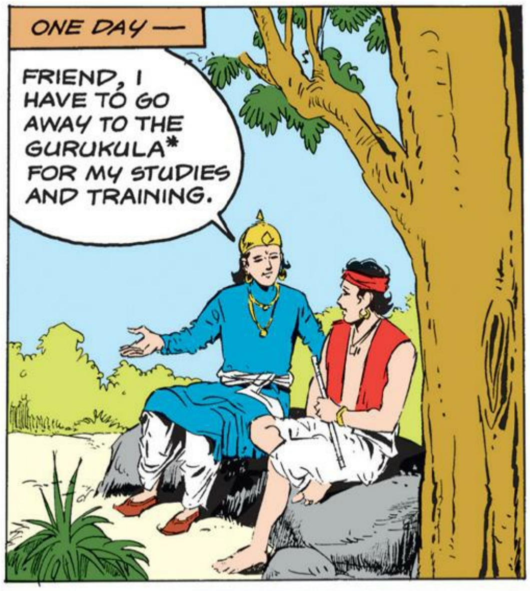

YOU GLOW WITH AN INNER BEAUTY. RUPANJALI'S BEAUTY IS ONLY SKIN DEEP. COME, LET US GO TO THE LAND OF THE RAINBOW.
BUT THE BIRDS . . . IN THE CAGE ....

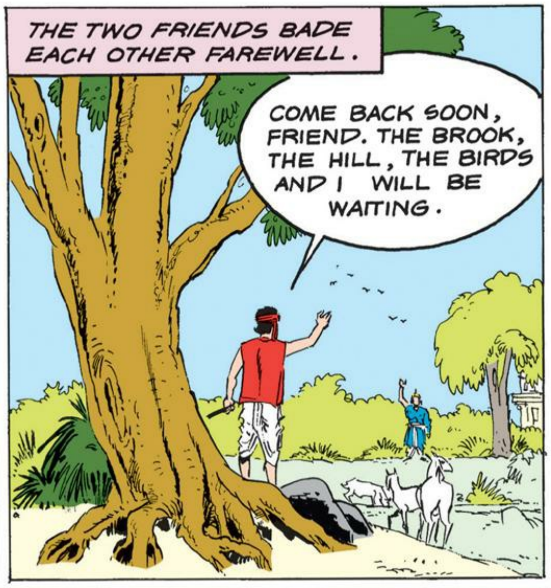

I HAVE ALREADY SET THEM FREE. LOOK!
I AM SO HAPPY!

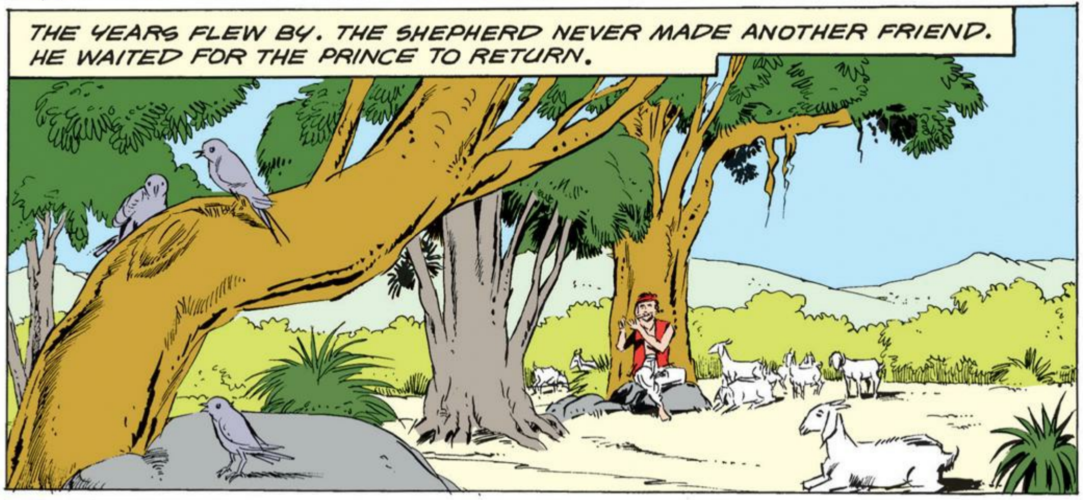

THEN THE PRINCE PLACED NILANJANA IN HIS GOLDEN CHARIOT AND SET OFF FOR THE LAND OF THE RAINBOW. RUPANJALI WAS LEFT BEHIND, A SADDER AND WISER GIRL.
IF ONLY YOU HAD BEEN A LITTLE MORE CONSIDERATE, RUPANJALI. ANYWAY, BE KIND AND GENTLE TO OTHERS IN FUTURE. THEN YOU ARE SURE TO FIND PEACE AND HAPPINESS.

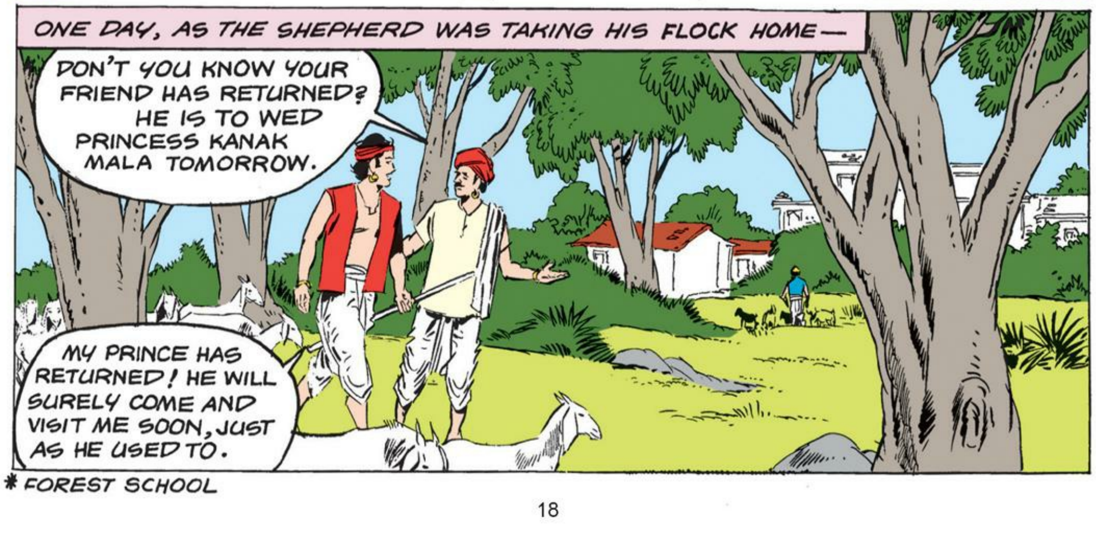
THE FAITHFUL SHEPHERD


THERE ONCE LIVED A PRINCE WHOSE BEST FRIEND WAS A SHEPHERD.
THEY SPENT A GREAT DEAL OF TIME TOGETHER, PLAYING AND ROMPING ABOUT.
WHEN YOU GROW UP AND BECOME KING YOU WON'T LET PEOPLE SHOOT DOWN THESE BIRDS, WILL YOU?
INDEED, I WILL NOT!
AND YOU WILL NOT FORGET ME?
HOW CAN I? YOU ARE MY BEST FRIEND. I WILL MAKE YOU MY MINISTER.

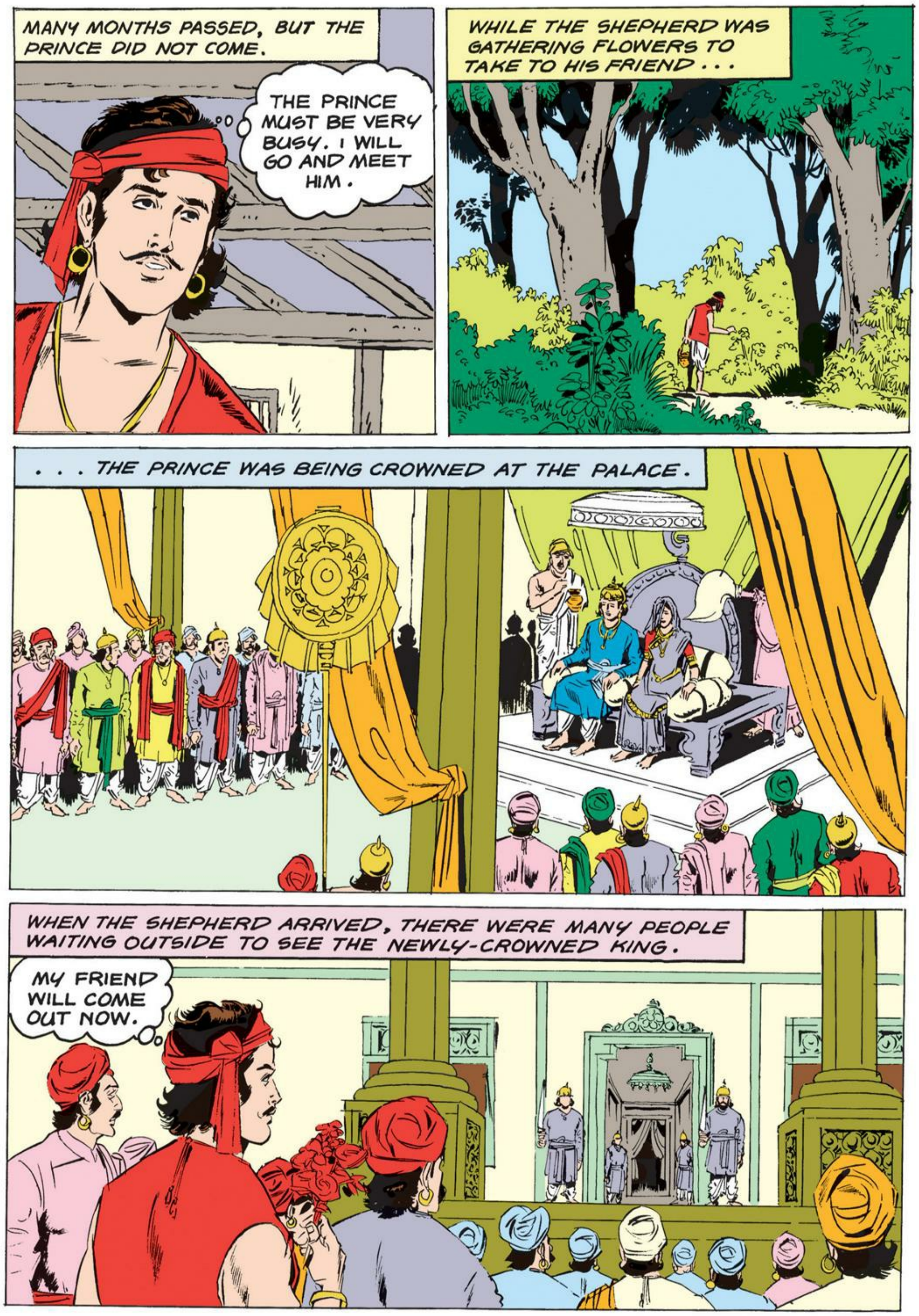

ONE DAY —
FRIEND, I HAVE TO GO AWAY TO THE GURUKULA* FOR MY STUDIES AND TRAINING.

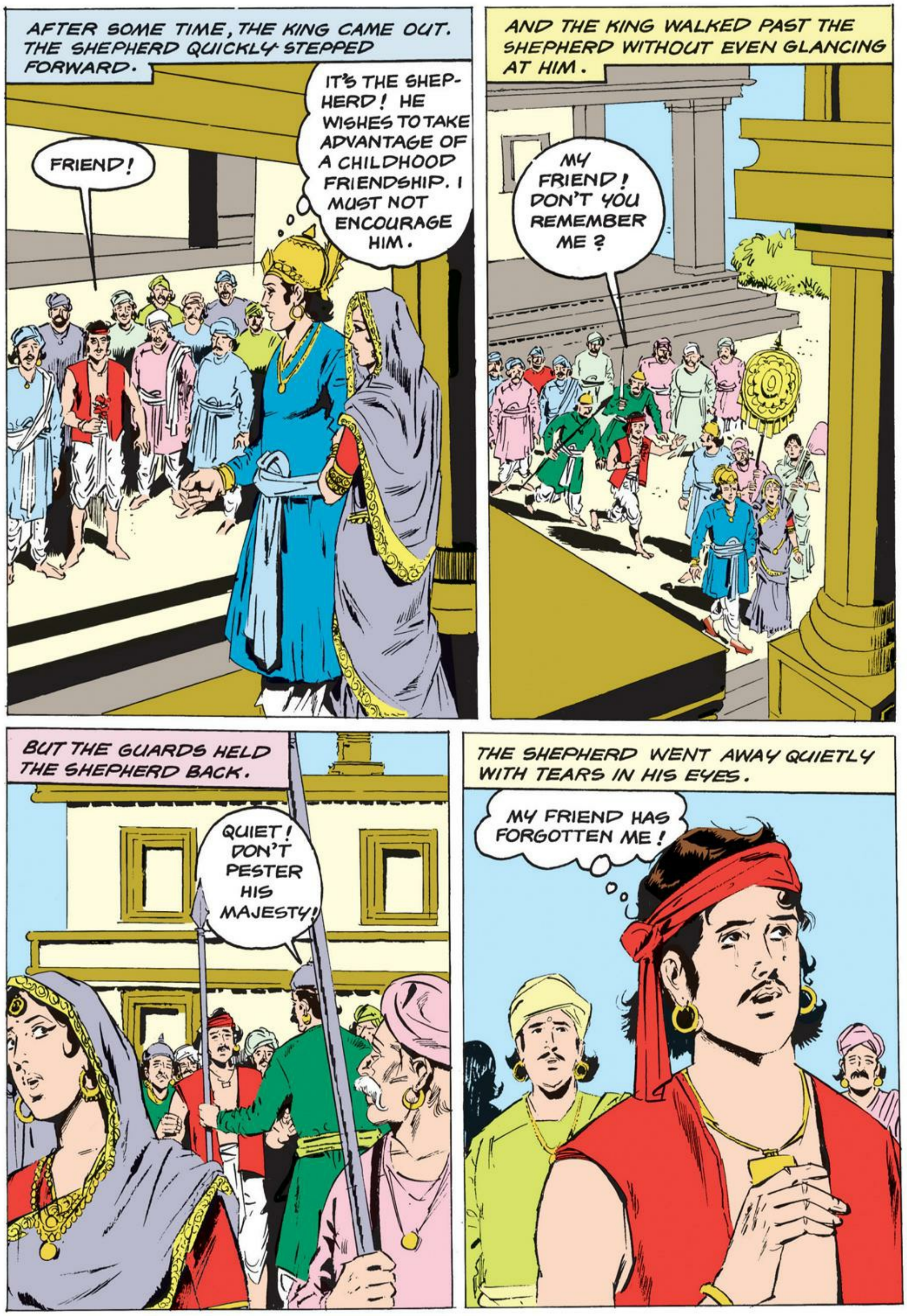

THE TWO FRIENDS BADE EACH OTHER FAREWELL.
COME BACK SOON, FRIEND. THE BROOK, THE HILL, THE BIRDS AND I WILL BE WAITING.

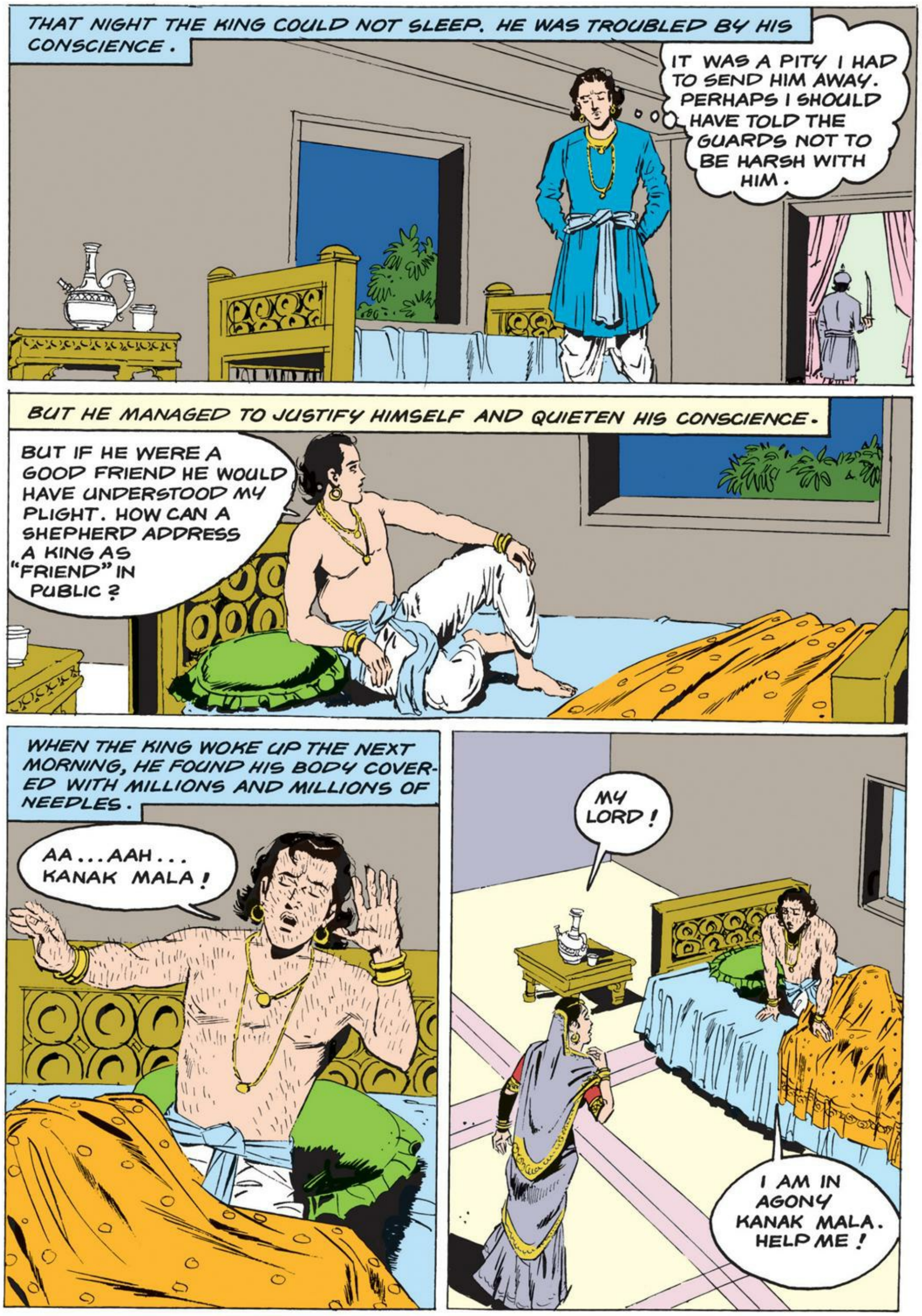

THE YEARS FLEW BY. THE SHEPHERD NEVER MADE ANOTHER FRIEND. HE WAITED FOR THE PRINCE TO RETURN.

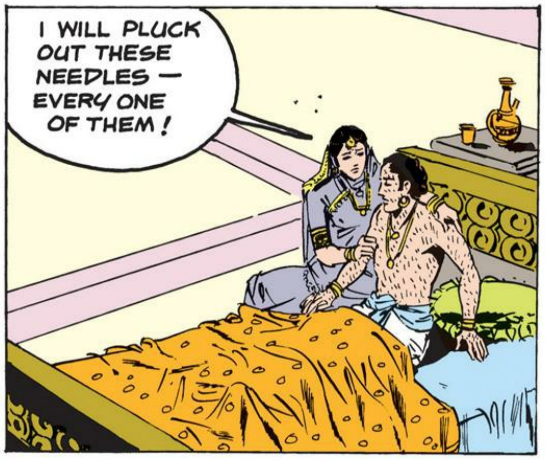

ONE DAY, AS THE SHEPHERD WAS TAKING HIS FLOCK HOME—
DON'T YOU KNOW YOUR FRIEND HAS RETURNED? HE IS TO WED PRINCESS KANAK MALA TOMORROW.
MY PRINCE HAS RETURNED! HE WILL SURELY COME AND VISIT ME SOON, JUST AS HE USED TO.

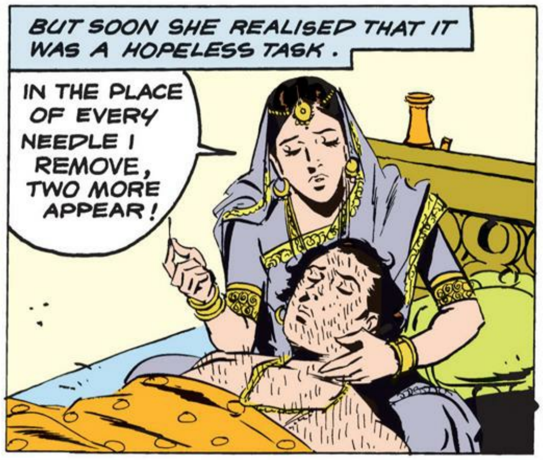
* FOREST SCHOOL

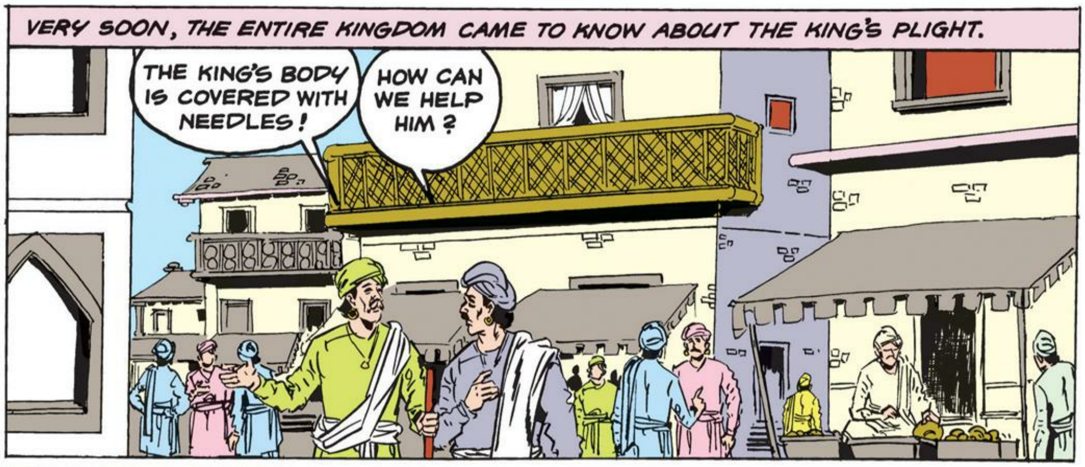

MANY MONTHS PASSED, BUT THE PRINCE DID NOT COME.
THE PRINCE MUST BE VERY BUSY. I WILL GO AND MEET HIM.
WHILE THE SHEPHERD WAS GATHERING FLOWERS TO TAKE TO HIS FRIEND . . .
. . . THE PRINCE WAS BEING CROWNED AT THE PALACE.
WHEN THE SHEPHERD ARRIVED, THERE WERE MANY PEOPLE WAITING OUTSIDE TO SEE THE NEWLY-CROWNED KING.
MY FRIEND WILL COME OUT NOW.

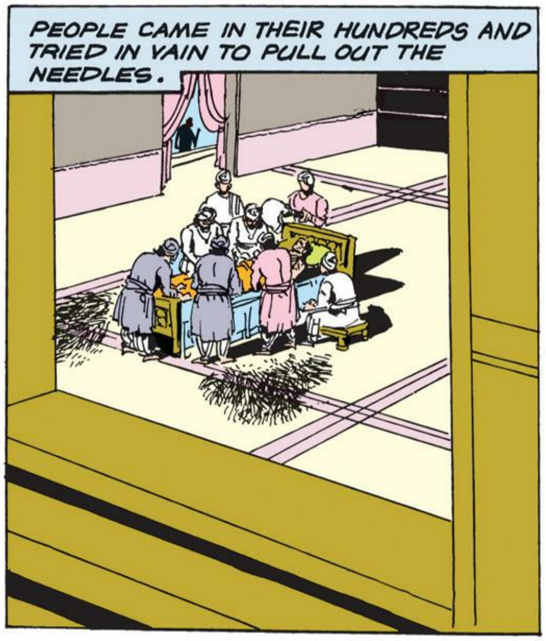

AFTER SOME TIME, THE KING CAME OUT. THE SHEPHERD QUICKLY STEPPED FORWARD.
FRIEND!
IT'S THE SHEPHERD! HE WISHES TO TAKE ADVANTAGE OF A CHILDHOOD FRIENDSHIP. I MUST NOT ENCOURAGE HIM.
AND THE KING WALKED PAST THE SHEPHERD WITHOUT EVEN GLANCING AT HIM.
MY FRIEND! DON'T YOU REMEMBER ME?
BUT THE GUARDS HELD THE SHEPHERD BACK.
QUIET! DON'T PESTER HIS MAJESTY!
THE SHEPHERD WENT AWAY QUIETLY WITH TEARS IN HIS EYES.
MY FRIEND HAS FORGOTTEN ME!

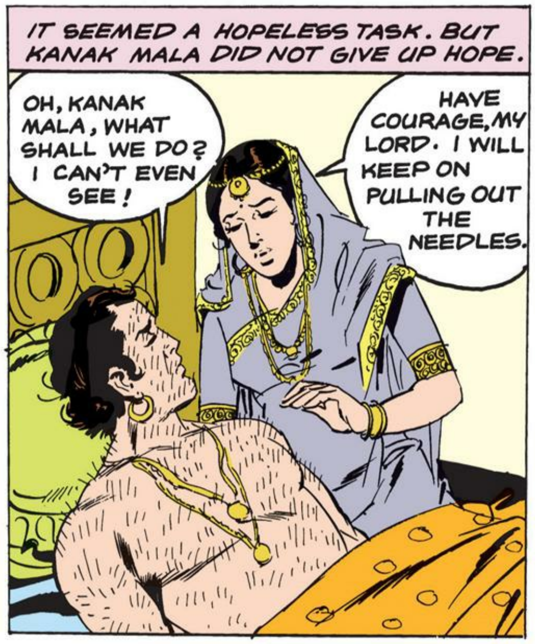

THAT NIGHT THE KING COULD NOT SLEEP. HE WAS TROUBLED BY HIS CONSCIENCE.
IT WAS A PITY I HAD TO SEND HIM AWAY. PERHAPS I SHOULD HAVE TOLD THE GUARDS NOT TO BE HARSH WITH HIM.
BUT HE MANAGED TO JUSTIFY HIMSELF AND QUIETEN HIS CONSCIENCE.
BUT IF HE WERE A GOOD FRIEND HE WOULD HAVE UNDERSTOOD MY PLIGHT. HOW CAN A SHEPHERD ADDRESS A KING AS "FRIEND" IN PUBLIC ?
WHEN THE KING WOKE UP THE NEXT MORNING, HE FOUND HIS BODY COVERED WITH MILLIONS AND MILLIONS OF NEEDLES.
AA... AAH... KANAK MALA !
MY LORD !
I AM IN AGONY KANAK MALA. HELP ME !

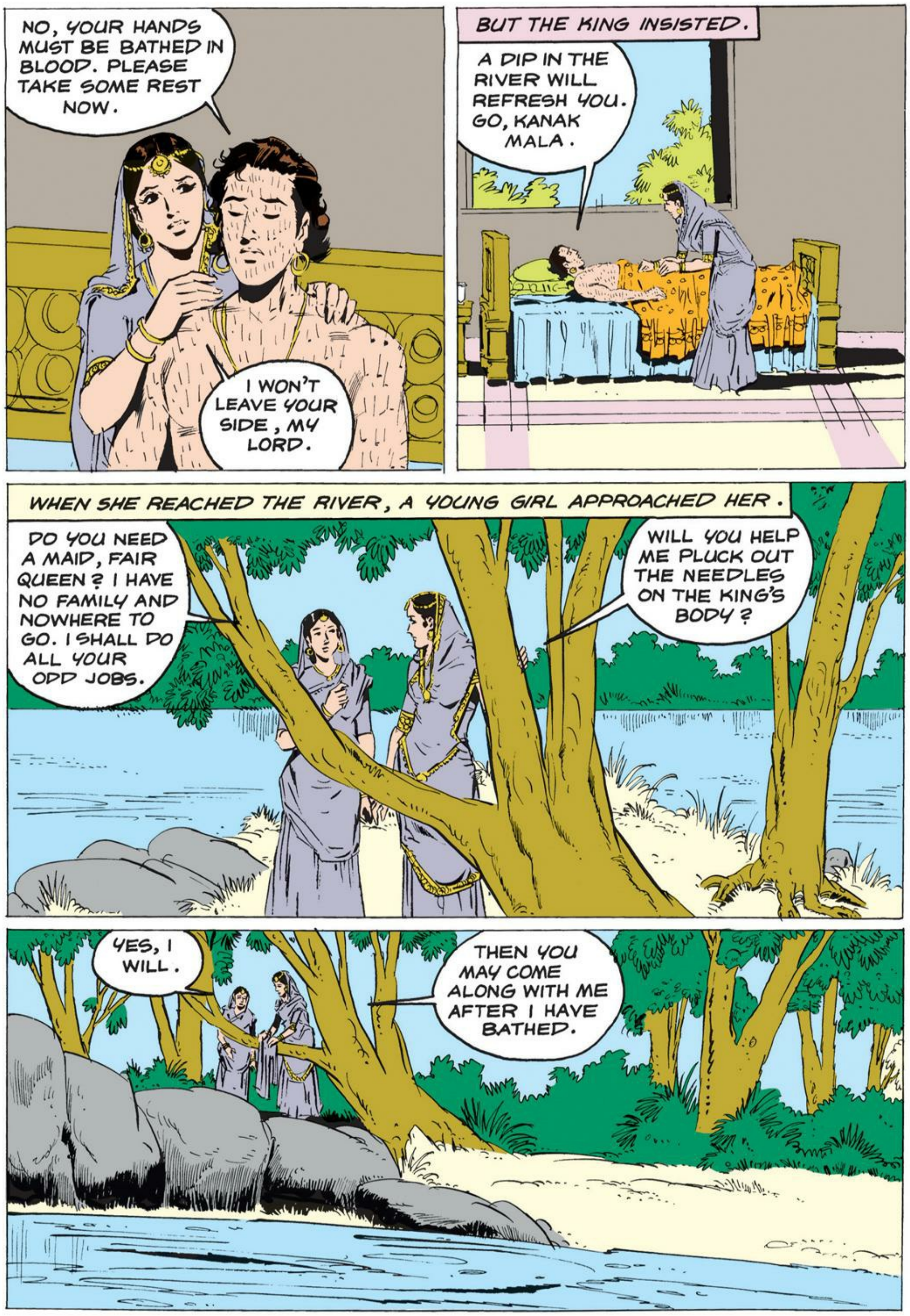

I WILL PLUCK OUT THESE NEEDLES — EVERY ONE OF THEM !

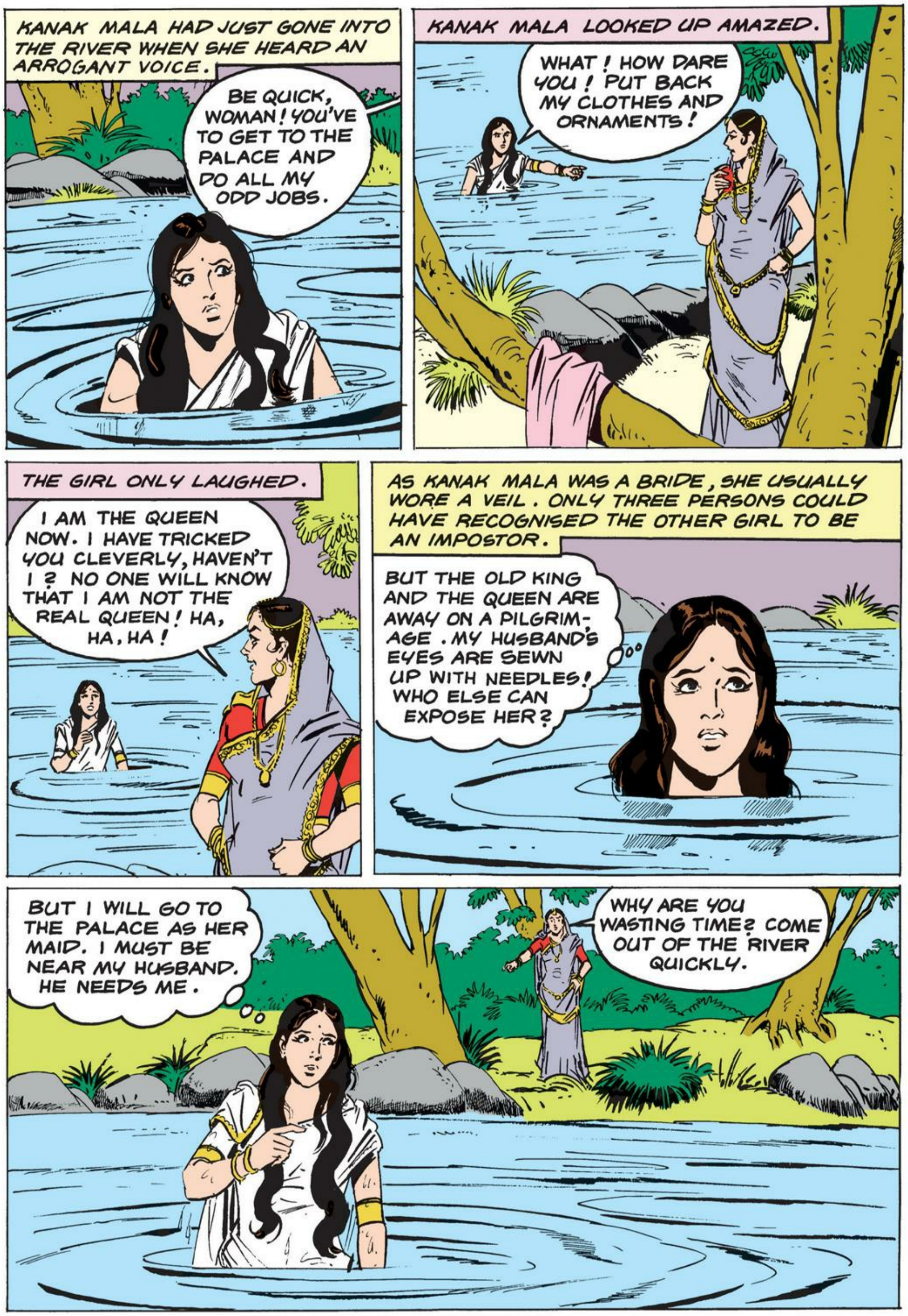

BUT SOON SHE REALISED THAT IT WAS A HOPELESS TASK .
IN THE PLACE OF EVERY NEEDLE I REMOVE, TWO MORE APPEAR !

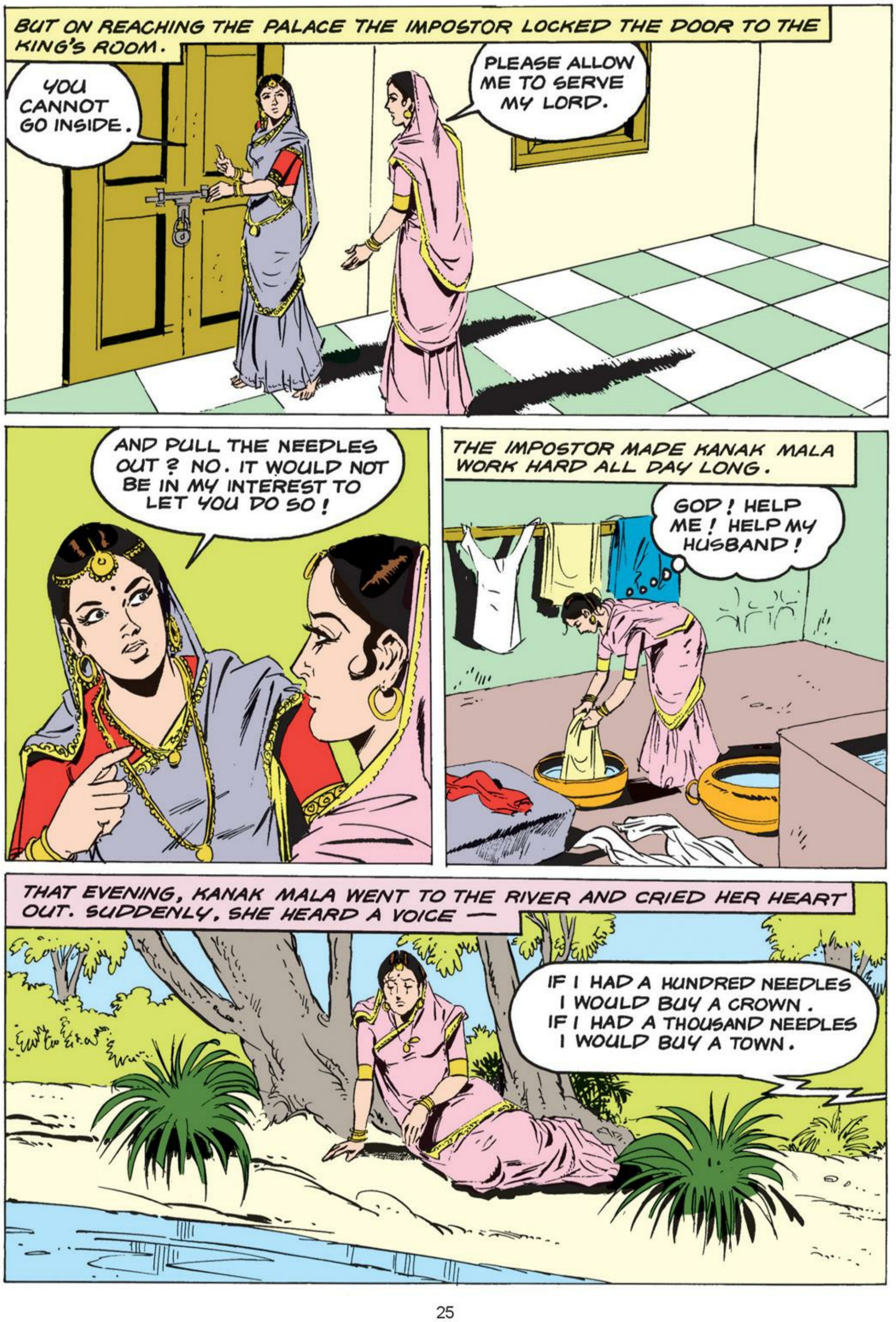

VERY SOON, THE ENTIRE KINGDOM CAME TO KNOW ABOUT THE KING'S PLIGHT.
THE KING'S BODY IS COVERED WITH NEEDLES !
HOW CAN WE HELP HIM ?

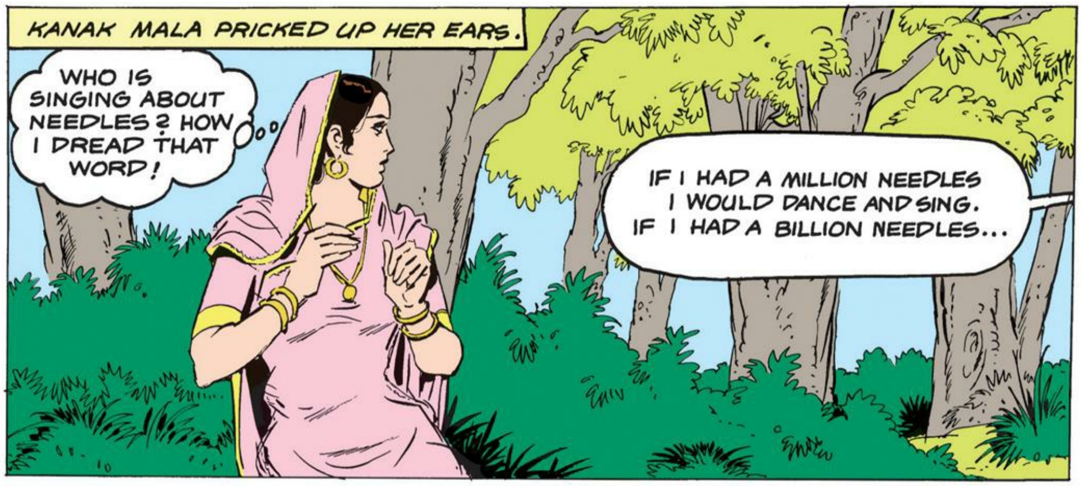

PEOPLE CAME IN THEIR HUNDREDS AND TRIED IN VAIN TO PULL OUT THE NEEDLES .

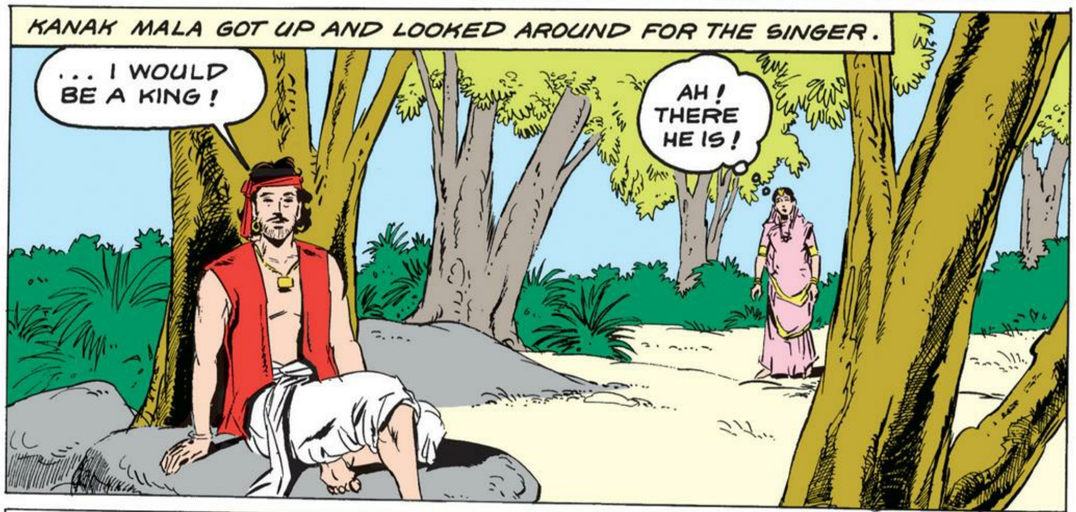

IT SEEMED A HOPELESS TASK . BUT KANAK MALA DID NOT GIVE UP HOPE .
OH, KANAK MALA , WHAT SHALL WE DO ? I CAN'T EVEN SEE !
HAVE COURAGE, MY LORD. I WILL KEEP ON PULLING OUT THE NEEDLES.

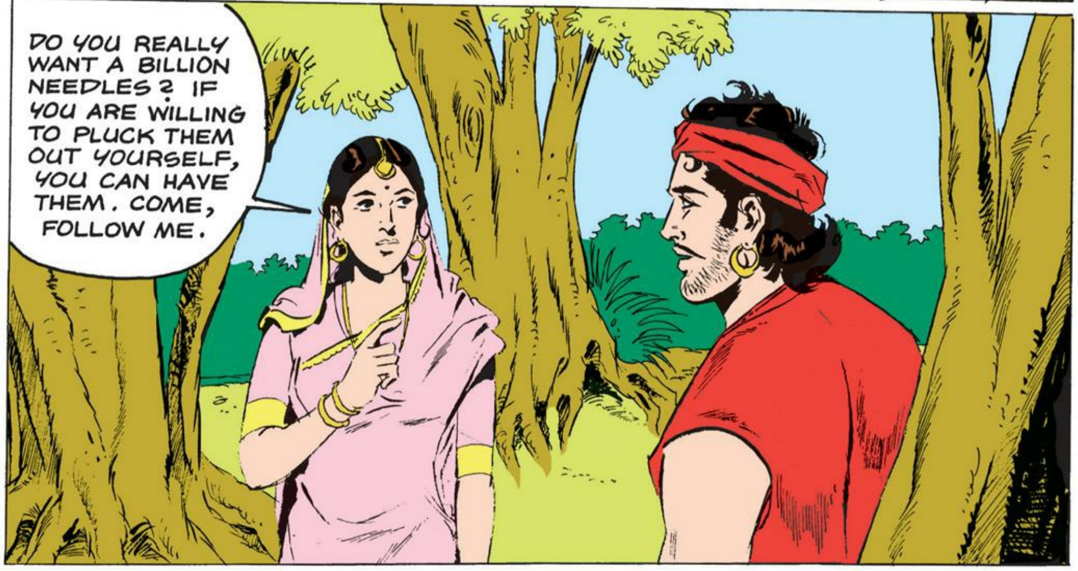

NO, YOUR HANDS MUST BE BATHED IN BLOOD. PLEASE TAKE SOME REST NOW.
I WON'T LEAVE YOUR SIDE, MY LORD.
BUT THE KING INSISTED.
A DIP IN THE RIVER WILL REFRESH YOU. GO, KANAK MALA.
WHEN SHE REACHED THE RIVER, A YOUNG GIRL APPROACHED HER.
DO YOU NEED A MAID, FAIR QUEEN? I HAVE NO FAMILY AND NOWHERE TO GO. I SHALL DO ALL YOUR ODD JOBS.
WILL YOU HELP ME PLUCK OUT THE NEEDLES ON THE KING'S BODY?
YES, I WILL.
THEN YOU MAY COME ALONG WITH ME AFTER I HAVE BATHED.

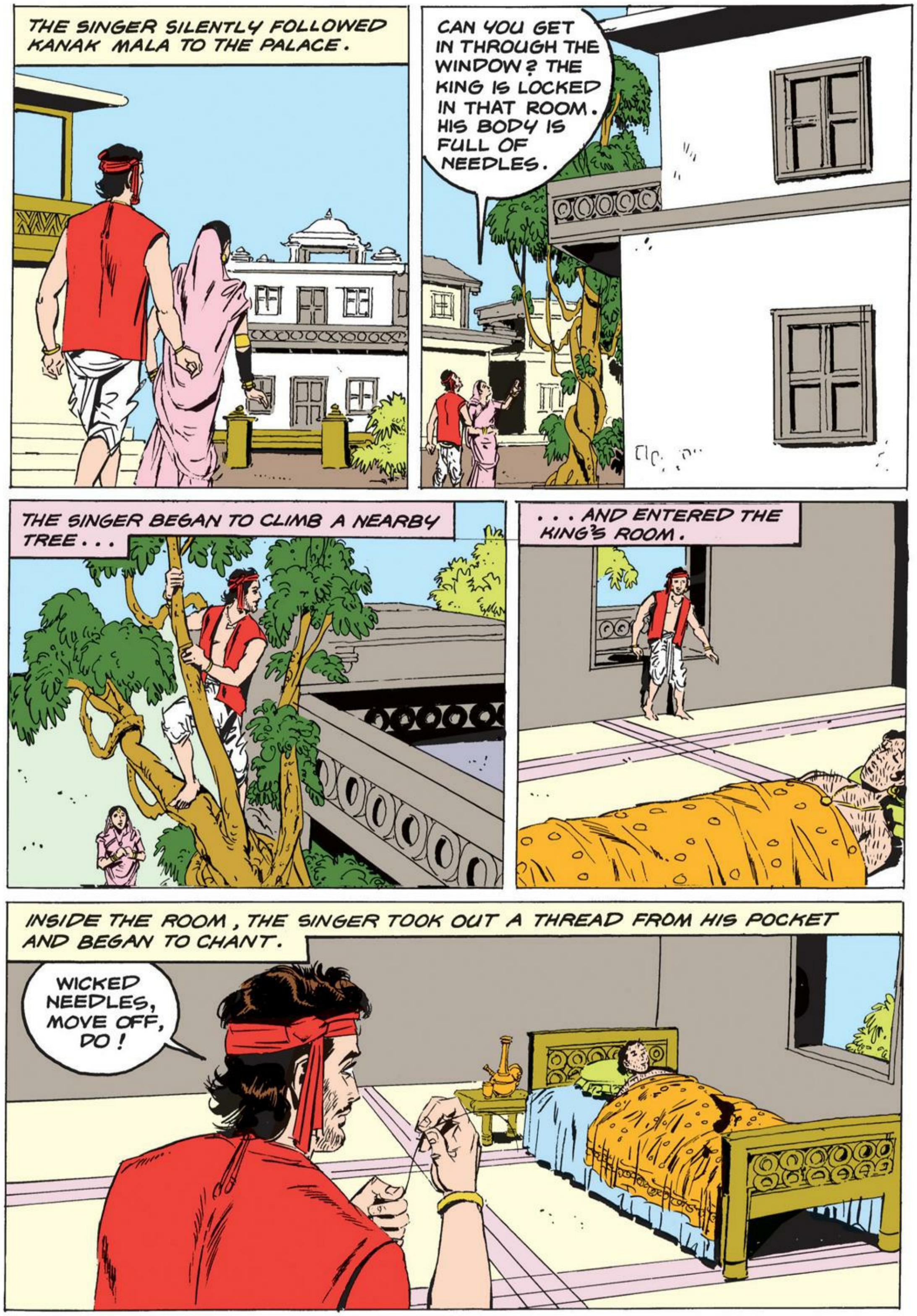

KANAK MALA HAD JUST GONE INTO THE RIVER WHEN SHE HEARD AN ARROGANT VOICE.
BE QUICK, WOMAN! YOU'VE TO GET TO THE PALACE AND DO ALL MY ODD JOBS.
KANAK MALA LOOKED UP AMAZED.
WHAT! HOW DARE YOU! PUT BACK MY CLOTHES AND ORNAMENTS!
THE GIRL ONLY LAUGHED.
I AM THE QUEEN NOW. I HAVE TRICKED YOU CLEVERLY, HAVEN'T I? NO ONE WILL KNOW THAT I AM NOT THE REAL QUEEN! HA, HA, HA!
AS KANAK MALA WAS A BRIDE, SHE USUALLY WORE A VEIL. ONLY THREE PERSONS COULD HAVE RECOGNISED THE OTHER GIRL TO BE AN IMPOSTOR.
BUT THE OLD KING AND THE QUEEN ARE AWAY ON A PILGRIMAGE. MY HUSBAND'S EYES ARE SEWN UP WITH NEEDLES! WHO ELSE CAN EXPOSE HER?
BUT I WILL GO TO THE PALACE AS HER MAID. I MUST BE NEAR MY HUSBAND. HE NEEDS ME.
WHY ARE YOU WASTING TIME? COME OUT OF THE RIVER QUICKLY.

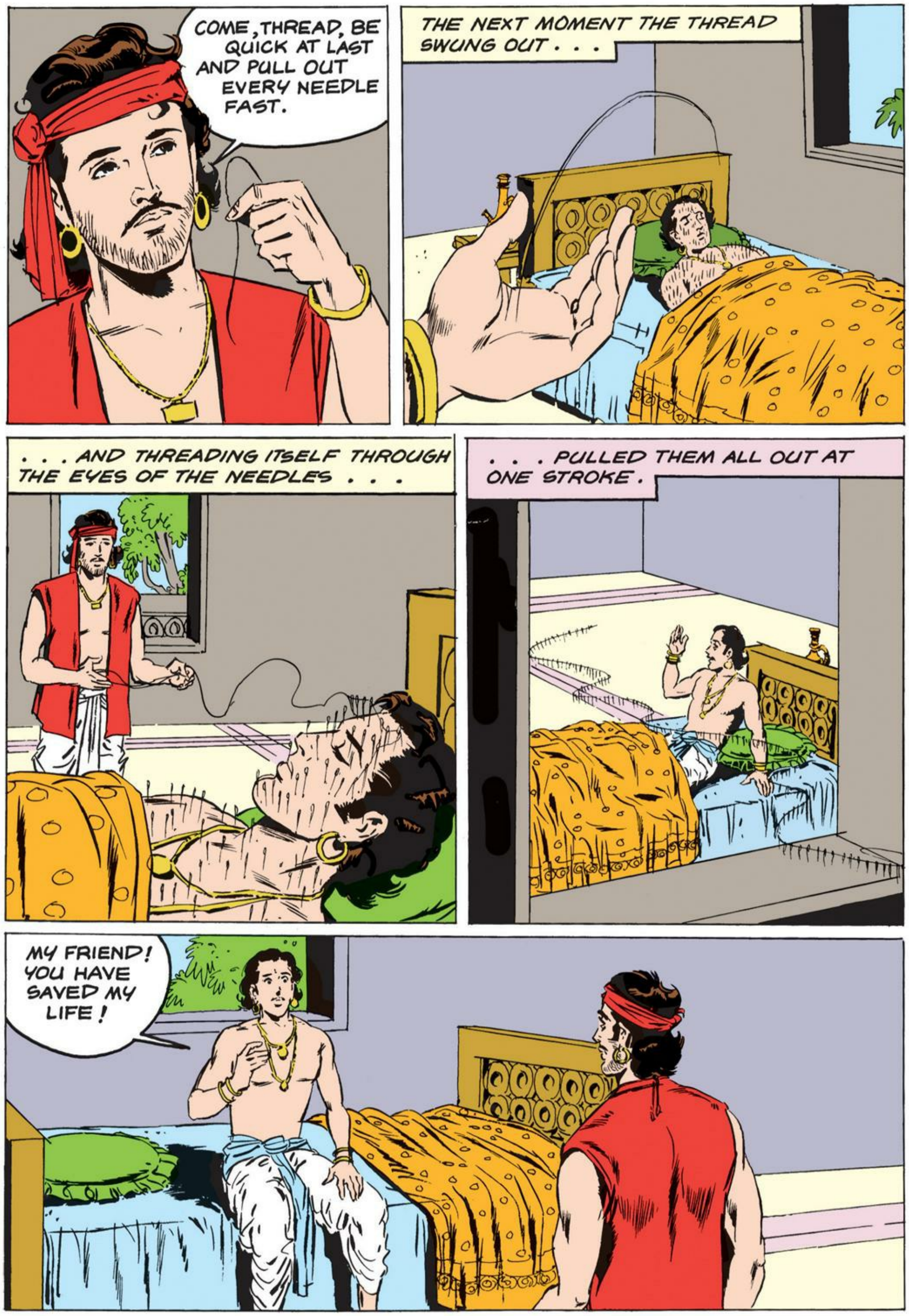

BUT ON REACHING THE PALACE THE IMPOSTOR LOCKED THE DOOR TO THE KING'S ROOM.
YOU CANNOT GO INSIDE.
PLEASE ALLOW ME TO SERVE MY LORD.
AND PULL THE NEEDLES OUT ? NO. IT WOULD NOT BE IN MY INTEREST TO LET YOU DO SO !
THE IMPOSTOR MADE KANAK MALA WORK HARD ALL DAY LONG.
GOD ! HELP ME ! HELP MY HUSBAND !
THAT EVENING, KANAK MALA WENT TO THE RIVER AND CRIED HER HEART OUT. SUDDENLY, SHE HEARD A VOICE —
IF I HAD A HUNDRED NEEDLES I WOULD BUY A CROWN. IF I HAD A THOUSAND NEEDLES I WOULD BUY A TOWN.

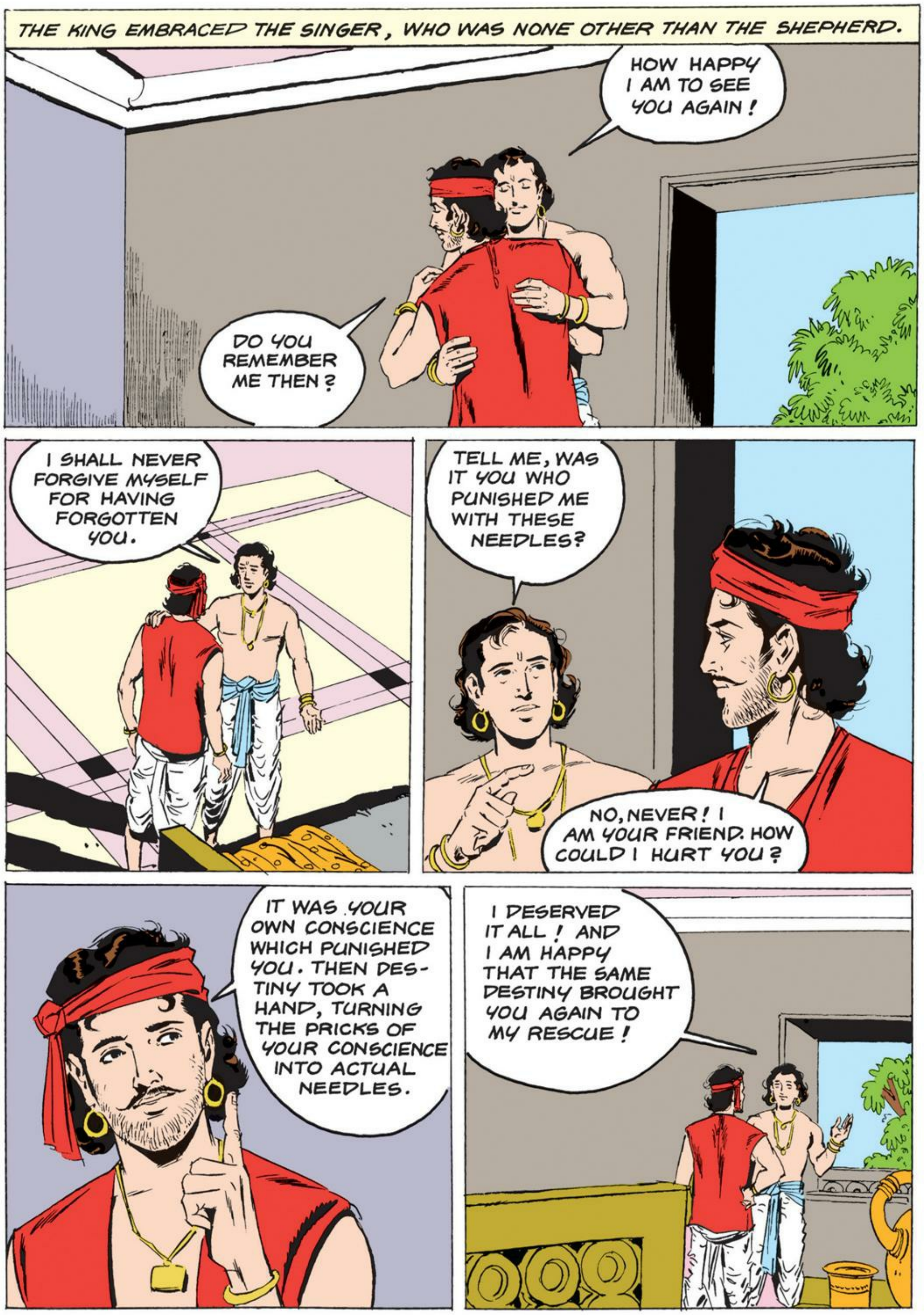

KANAK MALA PRICKED UP HER EARS.
WHO IS SINGING ABOUT NEEDLES ? HOW I DREAD THAT WORD!
IF I HAD A MILLION NEEDLES I WOULD DANCE AND SING. IF I HAD A BILLION NEEDLES...

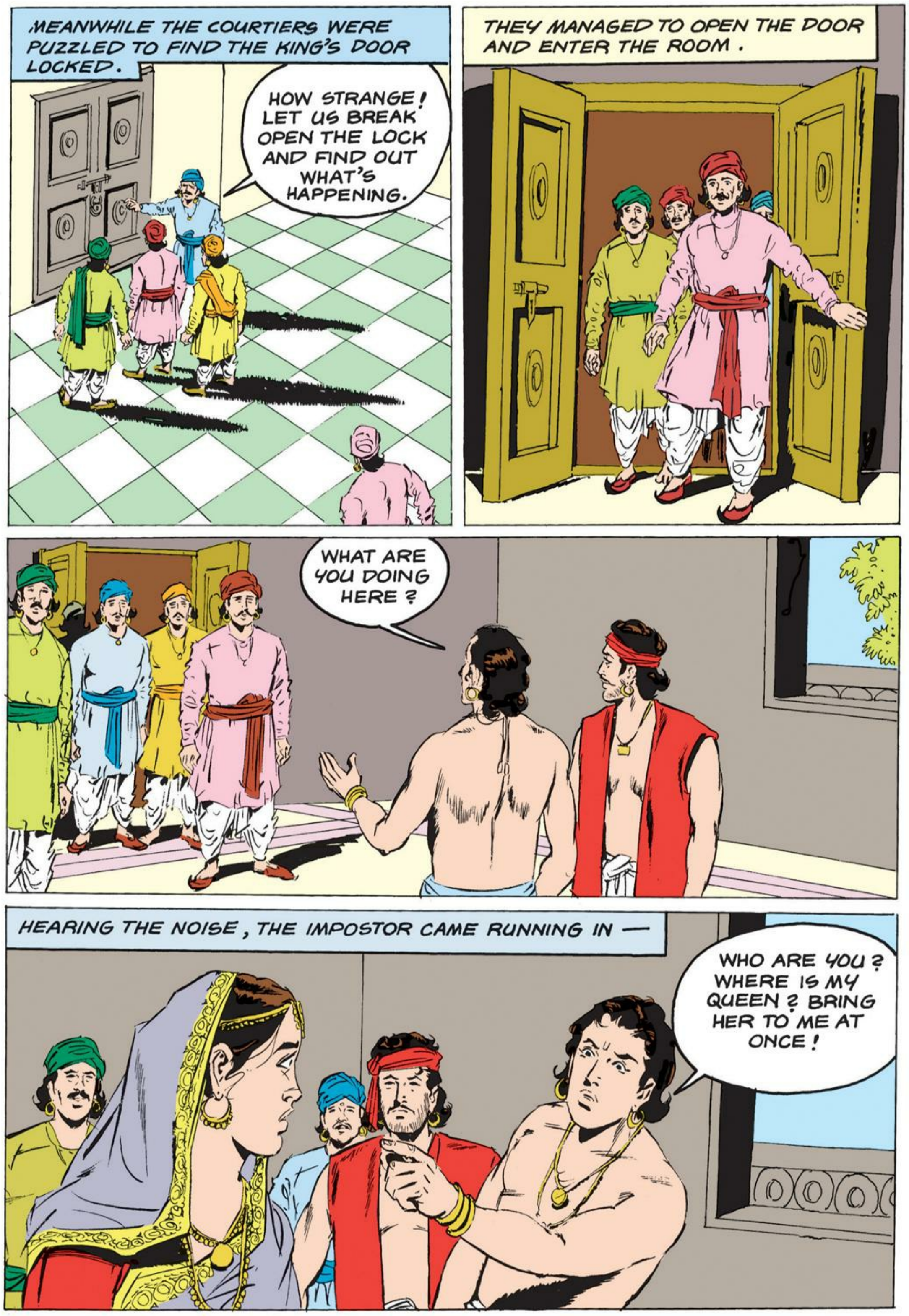

KANAK MALA GOT UP AND LOOKED AROUND FOR THE SINGER.
... I WOULD BE A KING!
AH! THERE HE IS!

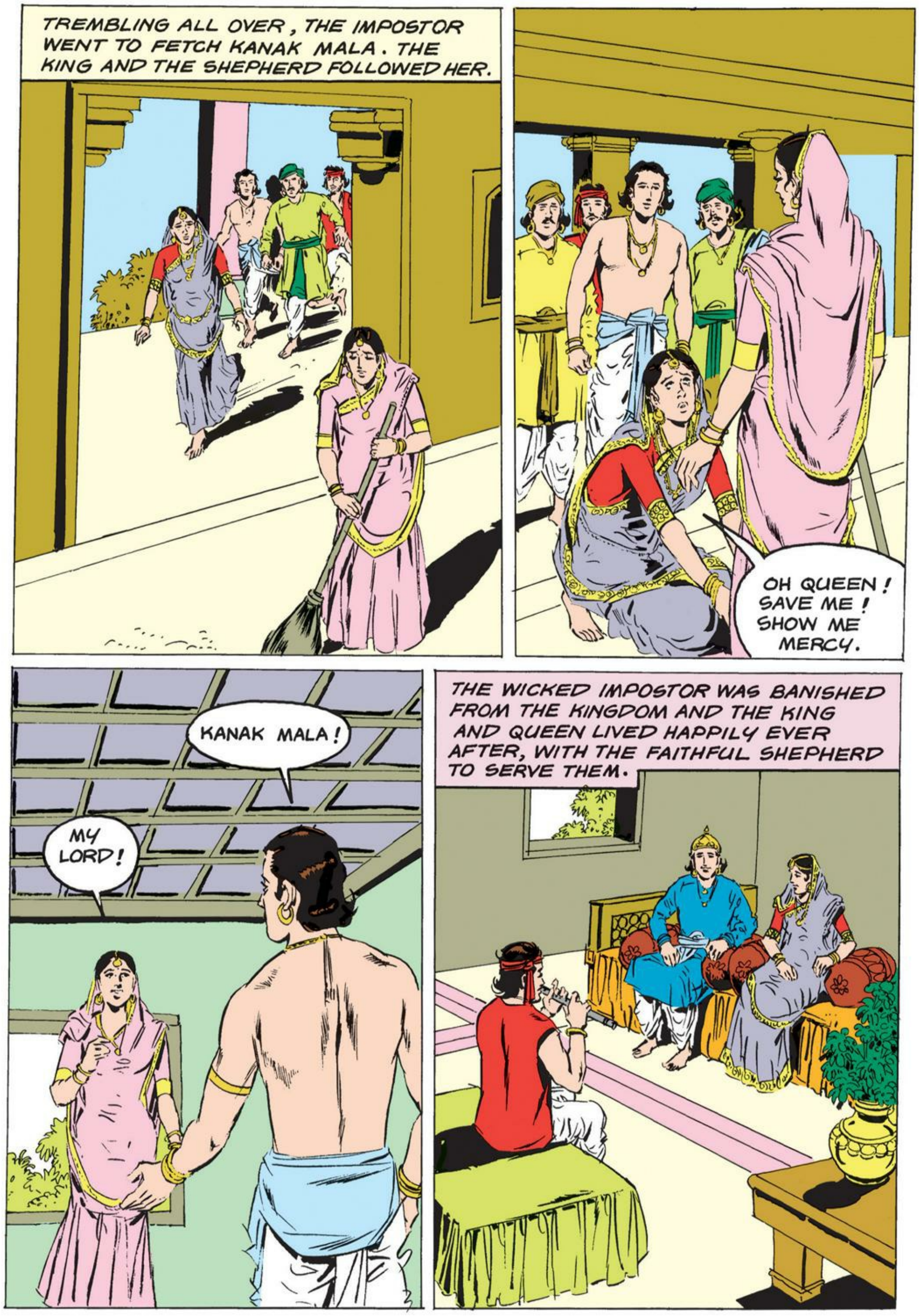

DO YOU REALLY WANT A BILLION NEEDLES ? IF YOU ARE WILLING TO PLUCK THEM OUT YOURSELF, YOU CAN HAVE THEM. COME, FOLLOW ME.

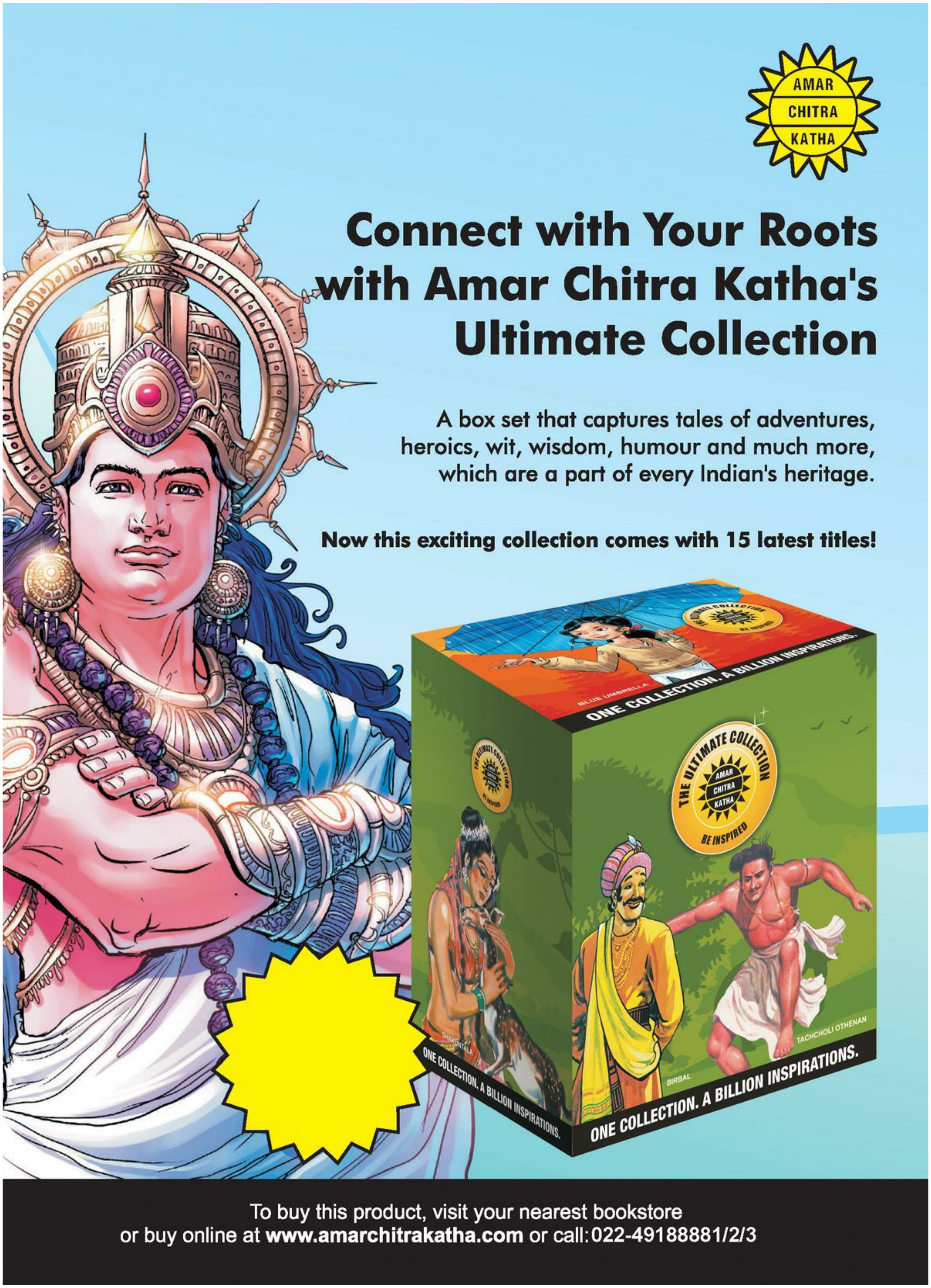

THE SINGER SILENTLY FOLLOWED KANAK MALA TO THE PALACE.
CAN YOU GET IN THROUGH THE WINDOW? THE KING IS LOCKED IN THAT ROOM. HIS BODY IS FULL OF NEEDLES.
THE SINGER BEGAN TO CLIMB A NEARBY TREE...
...AND ENTERED THE KING'S ROOM.
INSIDE THE ROOM, THE SINGER TOOK OUT A THREAD FROM HIS POCKET AND BEGAN TO CHANT.
WICKED NEEDLES, MOVE OFF, DO!


COME, THREAD, BE QUICK AT LAST AND PULL OUT EVERY NEEDLE FAST.
THE NEXT MOMENT THE THREAD SWUNG OUT . . .
. . . AND THREADING ITSELF THROUGH THE EYES OF THE NEEDLES . . .
. . . PULLED THEM ALL OUT AT ONE STROKE .
MY FRIEND! YOU HAVE SAVED MY LIFE !


THE KING EMBRACED THE SINGER, WHO WAS NONE OTHER THAN THE SHEPHERD.
HOW HAPPY I AM TO SEE YOU AGAIN!
DO YOU REMEMBER ME THEN?
I SHALL NEVER FORGIVE MYSELF FOR HAVING FORGOTTEN YOU.
TELL ME, WAS IT YOU WHO PUNISHED ME WITH THESE NEEDLES?
NO, NEVER! I AM YOUR FRIEND. HOW COULD I HURT YOU?
IT WAS YOUR OWN CONSCIENCE WHICH PUNISHED YOU. THEN DESTINY TOOK A HAND, TURNING THE PRICKS OF YOUR CONSCIENCE INTO ACTUAL NEEDLES.
I DESERVED IT ALL! AND I AM HAPPY THAT THE SAME DESTINY BROUGHT YOU AGAIN TO MY RESCUE!


MEANWHILE THE COURTIERS WERE PUZZLED TO FIND THE KING'S DOOR LOCKED.
HOW STRANGE! LET US BREAK OPEN THE LOCK AND FIND OUT WHAT'S HAPPENING.
THEY MANAGED TO OPEN THE DOOR AND ENTER THE ROOM.
WHAT ARE YOU DOING HERE?
HEARING THE NOISE, THE IMPOSTOR CAME RUNNING IN —
WHO ARE YOU? WHERE IS MY QUEEN? BRING HER TO ME AT ONCE!


TREMBLING ALL OVER, THE IMPOSTOR WENT TO FETCH KANAK MALA. THE KING AND THE SHEPHERD FOLLOWED HER.
OH QUEEN! SAVE ME! SHOW ME MERCY.
KANAK MALA!
MY LORD!
THE WICKED IMPOSTOR WAS BANISHED FROM THE KINGDOM AND THE KING AND QUEEN LIVED HAPPILY EVER AFTER, WITH THE FAITHFUL SHEPHERD TO SERVE THEM.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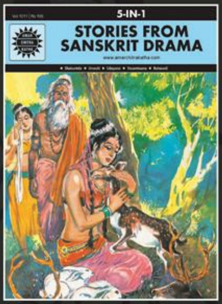
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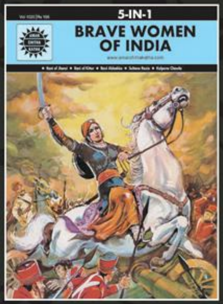
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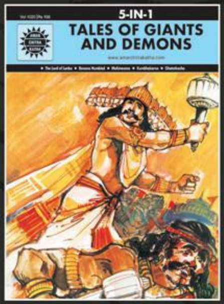
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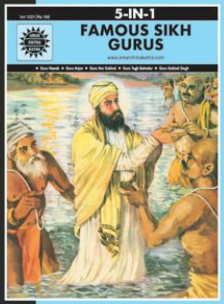
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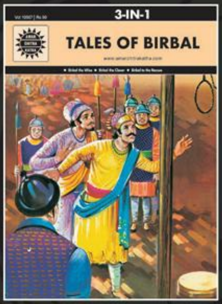
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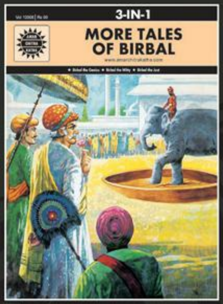
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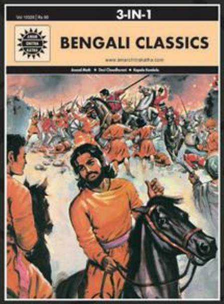
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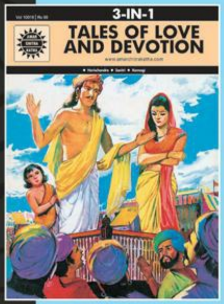
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